

# *SPECIALTY FIELDS*

## PART I

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### NONTRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES, THEORY, AND METHODOLOGY

# THE SOCIOLOGY OF NONHUMAN ANIMALS AND SOCIETY

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Human interaction with nonhuman animals is a central feature of contemporary social life. The majority of households in the United States (64 percent) include at least one companion animal (American Veterinary Medical Association 2003); more people visit zoos each year than attend professional sporting events; people are more likely to carry photographs of their pets than of their children; married women report that their pets are more important sources of affection than are their husbands or children (Arluke 2003); more money is spent each year on pet food (\$14.5 billion in 2004) than on baby food; and the income of the pet industry, which has more than doubled in size in the past decade (Karla 2005), amounts to almost \$36 billion each year (Fetterman 2005).

However, since “the social sciences tend to present themselves pre-eminently as the sciences of discontinuity between humans and animals” (Noske 1990:66) and, despite the fact that human interactions with animals are so commonplace, they have, until fairly recently, been virtually ignored within sociology.<sup>1</sup> The basic foundation for this lack of attention to human-animal issues was established in the seventeenth century by the philosopher René Descartes, who regarded animals as mindless machines. The Cartesian orthodoxy that has, until only recently, excluded animals from social scientific analysis is based on the linguacentric assumption that because animals lack the ability to employ spoken language they, consequently, lack the ability to think. In posing the “conversation test,” Descartes (1976) maintained that

it is a very remarkable fact that there are none so depraved and stupid, without even excepting idiots, that they cannot arrange different words together. . . . [O]n the other hand, there is no other animal, however perfect and fortunately circumstanced it may be, which can do the same. . . . [T]hey cannot speak as we do, that is, so as to give evidence that they think. (Pp. 61–62)

Nonetheless, although they tended to offer relatively unsystematic, highly emotionalized, and unempirical discussions, a handful of nineteenth-century sociologists did focus on animal abilities and human-animal relationships. For example, Harriet Martineau ([1865] 2003), an early pioneer in observational methods, wrote about the problems caused by feral dogs in urban areas, and in the *Quarterly Review* Frances Power Cobbe ([1872] 2003) speculated about the relationship between dogs’ physical characteristics and their mental abilities.

Despite this limited attention, early twentieth-century sociology continued to largely disregard nonhuman animals as social actors. Although George Herbert Mead (1962, 1964) frequently discussed nonhuman animals in his writing, he employed descriptions of the *behavior* of animals as the backdrop against which he juxtaposed his model of human *action*. In laying the intellectual groundwork for what would later become symbolic interactionism, Mead maintained that, although animals were social beings, their interactions involved only a primitive and instinctual “conversation of gestures” (e.g., the dog’s growl or the cat’s hiss). From Mead’s perspective, animals

lacked the ability to employ significant symbols and were therefore unable to negotiate meaning and take the role of cointeractants. Their behavior was directed toward achieving simple goals such as acquiring food or defending territory, but, unable to use language, their behavior was devoid of meaning. They were mindless, selfless, and emotionless. To Mead (1962) the view that nonhuman animals have more sophisticated mental, emotional, and social lives was based merely on anthropomorphic projection. As he observed,

We, of course, tend to endow our domestic animals with personality, but as we get insight into their conditions we see there is no place for this sort of importation of the social process into the conduct of the individual. They do not have the mechanism for it—language. So we say that they have no personality; they are not responsible for the social situation in which they find themselves. . . . We put personalities into the animals, but they do not belong to them. . . . And yet the common attitude is that of giving them just such personalities as our own. We talk to them and in our talking to them we act as if they had the sort of inner world that we have. (Pp. 182–83; see also Mead 1907)

Interestingly, however, Max Weber (1947), writing before Mead, had acknowledged the possibility of including nonhuman animals in sociological analysis.

In so far [as the behavior of animals is subjectively understandable] it would be theoretically possible to formulate a sociology of the relations of men to animals, both domestic and wild. Thus, many animals “understand” commands, anger, love, hostility, and react to them in ways which are evidently often by no means purely instinctive and mechanical and in some sense both consciously meaningful and affected by experience. (P. 104)

Despite Weber’s apparent willingness to include animals, Mead’s anthropocentric orientation largely laid the groundwork for the conventional discounting of animals and lack of attention to their interactions with humans that dominated sociological thought until the last quarter of the twentieth century. The sole dissent to Mead’s myopia was offered by Read Bain, an early positivist and Mead’s colleague at the University of Chicago. In a little-known, but significant, paper titled “The Culture of Canines,” Bain (1929) criticized the anthropocentrism of sociology and advocated the development of an “animal sociology.” In his article, Bain maintained that “just as animal intelligent and emotional behavior, anatomical and physiological structure and function, and group life, have their correlates in human behavior, so the dividing line between animal and human culture is likewise vague and arbitrary” (p. 555).

Notwithstanding Bain’s dissent, sociology continued to exclude animals until Clifton Bryant (1979), in a seminal article, issued a call for sociologists to focus serious attention on what he referred to as the *zoological connection*. In this paper, Bryant bemoaned the fact that

sociologists, among the practitioners in most of the behavioral sciences and many of the humanities, have been singularly derelict in their failure to address the zoological component in human interactions and attendant social systems. We have tended not to recognize, to overlook, to ignore, or to neglect . . . the influence of animals, or their import for, our social behavior, our relationships with other humans, and the directions which our social enterprise often takes. (P. 339)

## INTERDISCIPLINARY INVOLVEMENT

Although the systematic investigation of animals’ mental and social abilities and people’s interactions with them has only fairly recently emerged as a focal interest in sociology, the topic has long been of concern to anthropologists. Renowned anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss (1966), Mary Douglas (1966), and Edmund Leach (1964), for example, stressed the central symbolic importance of animals in simple societies. Eugenia Shanklin (1985:379) described the study of animals as a “thriving field” in anthropology, and in his classic discussion of the Balinese cockfight, Clifford Geertz (1973:412–53) maintained that the cockfight sheds significant light on how Balinese society and relationships are structured.

Arguably, the current interdisciplinary focus on human-animal interactions (now conventionally referred to as *anthrozoology* or *human-animal studies*) derives from the work of the psychologist Boris Levinson (1965, 1969), who explored the use of animals within therapeutic settings. Levinson’s work established the current popular focus by psychologists and medical researchers on the effect of interactions with animals and pet ownership on human mental and physical health (e.g., Friedmann 1995; Friedmann, Thomas, and Eddy 2000; Garrity and Stallones 1998). Psychologists such as Gordon Burghardt (1985), Timothy Eddy (Eddy 2003; Eddy, Gallup, and Povenelli 1993), Harold Herzog (1993), and Kenneth Shapiro (1990, 1997) continue to be major figures in the field.

Ethologists have also provided significant impetus to the study of human-animal relationships. The work of Donald Griffin (1992) and other “cognitive ethologists” (see Jamieson and Bekoff 1993; Ristau 1991) is particularly noteworthy in that it stressed the importance of studying animals in their natural settings and deriving understandings of their mental abilities by attending to novel and adaptive behaviors precipitated by problematic situations.

The study of human-animal relationships has also found a place in various other social scientific disciplines. For example, the geographer Jennifer Wolch (Elder, Wolch, and Emel 1998; Wolch 1998) has investigated perceptions of and relationships with animals in urban ethnic groups; criminologists such as Piers Beirne (1995, 1999) and Geertrui Cazaux (1998) have discussed bestiality, animal abuse, and laws related to the treatment of animals; consumer researchers such as Elizabeth Hirschman (1994)

and Russell Belk (1988) have written about pets as consumer products and discussed the role of pets as extensions of their owners' selves.<sup>2</sup>

The interdisciplinary literature on human-animal relationships has also been extended by the work of historians. Harriet Ritvo (1987), one of the best-known historians working in the area, has written extensively on pet-keeping in Victorian England. Kathleen Kete (1994) has offered a similar discussion of the role of pets in nineteenth-century Paris, and Keith Thomas (1983) has explored changing attitudes toward animals from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, with particular attention to the role of urbanization in this process.<sup>3</sup>

Scholars in a variety of other fields from philosophy (e.g., Tuan 1984) through leisure studies (e.g., Marvin 1988; Mullan and Marvin 1987) to disability studies (e.g., Michalko 1999) have also expanded our understanding of people's relationships with animals. This interdisciplinary work has been invaluable as it has provided a range of perspectives, offered a wealth of substantive knowledge, and helped establish an intellectual foundation for the explicitly sociological explorations of human-animal relationships that have emerged within the past two decades.

### THE RISING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS

By the end of the twentieth century, human-animal studies had gained significant legitimacy within the social and behavioral sciences. Evidence of the growth of the field is demonstrated by the fact that three major academic presses (Brill Academic Publishers, Purdue University Press, and Temple University Press) currently have book series devoted to human-animal studies and there are two well-regarded specialty journals in the area (*Society and Animals* and *Anthrozoös*) that regularly publish sociological articles. In addition, since the mid-1980s, a number of sociological journals (*Marriage and the Family*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Social Research*, *Journal of Social Issues*, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, *Sociological Origins*) have published special issues dedicated to the topic, and major articles have appeared in established sociological publications such as *American Behavioral Scientist*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Sociological Forum*, *Symbolic Interaction*, *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *Human Organization*, *Sociological Inquiry*, and *Social Forces*.

At the same time, an organizational structure has grown up to support the field. The dominant association devoted to human-animal studies is the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ). A major milestone was passed in the legitimation of the topic within sociology when in 2002—after some five years of application, petitioning, and denial—the “Animals and Society” section was established in the American Sociological Association (see

Nibert 2003). The organizational infrastructure of human-animal studies also includes major university-based centers in such institutions as the University of Minnesota, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of California at Davis, Tufts University, and Washington State University.<sup>4</sup>

A further demonstration of the rising academic significance of the area is seen in the growing number of “Animals and Society” courses in North American colleges and universities. Balcombe (1999) lists 89 such courses, and an annotated list of university courses found on the Web site of the Humane Society of the United States<sup>5</sup> presents 13 courses offered in sociology departments and an additional 27 in other social science disciplines.

### MAJOR DISCUSSIONS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIPS

A growing number of sociologists have responded to Bryant's (1979) call for attention to the “zoological connection.” As might be expected within a substantive field still vying for disciplinary acceptance, the monographs, articles, and chapters produced by these scholars typically are based on data collected through the use of conventional methods, reflect analyses based on conventional theoretical perspectives,<sup>6</sup> and deal with topics that are conventional within the sociological literature. Since, as discussed above, George Herbert Mead's theoretical exclusion of nonhuman animals from the realm of “authentic” (i.e., human and linguistically mediated) social exchanges played a major role in excluding animals from sociological discourse, much of the extant literature is oriented within the symbolic interactionist perspective. Janet and Steven Alger (1997, 2003a), Keri Brandt (2004), Leslie Irvine (2003, 2004a, 2004b), Eugene Myers (1998, 2003), Clinton Sanders (1993, 1999, 2003), and other interactionists have explicitly attacked the Meadian orthodoxy and have produced discussions of such central interactionist issues as mindedness, selfhood, identity, emotionality, and the social act. Conflict theory provides the other major theoretical grounding of human-animal sociology. These critical works present people's treatment of animals within the context of, and in relation to, other patterns of inequality precipitated by a sexist, racist, capitalist social structure (see Cazaux 1998; Nibert 2002; Noske 1997).

While much of the interdisciplinary research in human-animal studies employs conventional survey approaches focused on ascertaining people's attitudes toward animals and devising standardized instruments to measure these attitudes (e.g., Herzog, Betchart, and Pittman 1991; Kellert 1988, 1994; Knight et al. 2004; Rasmussen, Rajcecki, and Craft 1993), ethnographic methods dominate the work of sociologists active in the area. Because the sociologists interested in animal issues typically are pet caretakers themselves, autoethnographic (Ellis 1991; Hayano 1979) data drawn from the researcher's paying systematic

attention to his or her personal experiences commonly play a significant role in orienting these discussions. Content analysis provides the other major research tool used by sociologists working in this area as textual and pictorial materials such as introductory sociology text books (Alger and Alger 2003b), TV advertisements (Lerner and Kaloff 1999), films (Hirschman and Sanders 1997), and greeting cards (Brabant and Mooney 1989) are examined to reveal patterns in the cultural representation of animals.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to using standard methods and established theoretical perspectives, sociologists working in human-animal studies typically employ conventional substantive areas to contextualize their studies and discussions. One of the most popular substantive contexts is work and occupations. Many of the major discussions examine the experience of workers involved in animal-related occupational settings. For example, in the late 1980s, Arnold Arluke emerged as the major figure in this topical area, beginning with his 1988 article based on the ethnographic research he conducted in biomedical laboratories (Arluke 1988). Arluke's paper laid the groundwork for a theme that has become central to the substantive field—the dichotomy between defining animals as *pets* or functional objects and the impact of this determination on how animals are treated. Arluke expanded on this theme in his later writings, emphasizing the job-related ambivalence experienced by animal shelter workers (Arluke 1991), veterinary students (Arluke and Hafferty 1996), researchers in primate labs (in Arluke and Sanders 1996), and enforcement officers working for a state Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Arluke 2004). The number of studies focused on animal-related occupations has grown significantly as Carole Case (1991) has studied racetrack workers, Clinton Sanders has written about veterinarians (Sanders 1994, 1995) and guide-dog trainers (Sanders 1999:89–110), Leslie Irvine (2004a) has explored the occupational experiences of workers in an animal shelter, and Mary Phillips (1993) has discussed laboratory workers' perceptions of animal pain and emphasized the importance of whether or not laboratory animals were assigned names by those who had the job of caring for them (Phillips 1994).

Public interactions and the impact of being with an animal on a person's interactional experience and identity have also become important issues in the sociology of human-animal relationships. The groundwork for this focal issue was laid by Peter Messent (1983), who observed people walking in a London park. Those accompanied by dogs were significantly more likely to speak with strangers they encountered than were those who were alone. Later work by Robins and his associates (1991) explored the ways in which dogs facilitated interactions and the development of longer-term relationships in a dog park, and Sanders (2000) examined both positive and negative public encounters of people with visual disabilities precipitated by their use of guide dogs.

In an earlier article, Sanders (1990) focused on the connection between everyday dog caretakers' association with

a dog and the impact of canine misbehavior on people's public identity. Basing his analysis on the sociological literature on "vocabularies of motive" and "aligning actions" (e.g., Mills 1940; Stokes and Hewitt 1976), Sanders identified eight "excusing tactics" used by caretakers to realign normal interaction and reestablish their identities when their dogs misbehaved. Comparing his work with that of Cahill (1987) and others who had explored the child-adult "with" in public, Sanders (1990) stressed the central importance of people's public association with animals in shaping public identity and emphasized the potential of investigations of the human-animal relationship for advancing a general understanding of social interaction.

It is here in the public behavior of acting units composed of one (or more) socially competent actor(s) and an, at best, marginally socialized member (companion animal, child, retarded person, and so on) that we encounter a major element in the linkage between other-objects and the self. The associated "possession" is attached to the competent actor as an extension of self and "its" misbehavior may degrade the actor's self identity. *Self-control* includes and necessitates control of the associated other. In turn, failure to adequately exercise this form of self-control attacks the "owner's" sense of self as demonstrated by his or her common experience of public embarrassment. . . . [T]his discussion represents an attempt to further incorporate animal-human interaction into sociological discourse. Interactions and relationships are major foci of sociological interest and the narrow emphasis upon interhuman exchanges unnecessarily limits our understanding of both human and animal behavior. It is through the systematic examination of unexplored areas of social activity and the comparison of this information to that collected in more conventional settings that the process of building a general understanding of social life can proceed. (Pp. 87–88)

Another popular substantive area in which sociologists interested in animal issues have been working is social movements. Here the focus is on the animal rights movement, and, for the most part, this literature employs sociological approaches that have been used to examine and explain other types of social movement (Groves 1997; Jasper and Nelkin 1992; Sperling 1988; Tester 1992). This body of work, together with ecofeminist discussions (e.g., Adams 1994; Gaard 1993; Noske 1997) and the currently popular (and somewhat controversial) work focused on the presumed relationship between the abuse of animals and human-on-human violence (e.g., Arluke 2002; Flynn 1999; Kruse 1999), has firmly situated human-animal sociology in the arena of political analysis and advocacy.

Another topic of interest in human-animal sociological studies is the symbolic role of animals. Fine and Christoforides (1991), for example, discuss the "metaphorical linkage" between the English sparrow and immigrants in nineteenth-century America. They argue that the

controversy over the English sparrow was linked to the controversy over "the new immigration." A post-bellum America faced the task of rebuilding its moral boundaries

after the disruption of the Civil War and in the face of millions of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe and the Orient. The opponents of the English sparrow drew their imagery from the nativism (anti-foreignism) of the day. They defined the bird as: (1) a foreigner, (2) that competes unfairly with native birds, (3) that has an immoral character, and (4) that needs to be eliminated from the American community of birds. Examining the metaphorical linkages among public concerns of the same period, we suggest, is a fruitful way of examining social problems. (P. 375)

More recently, Reuben May (2004) discussed the symbolic significance of rodents in the “ideoculture” of young, African American males. On the basis of data drawn from ethnographic research with a high school basketball team, May stresses that the participants used mice, and aggressive talk about them, to symbolically define their masculinity.

Perhaps the richest focus of systematic attention within sociological human-animal studies has been on the everyday interactions between people and their companion animals. As indicated in the foregoing, this work has been done primarily by scholars working within the perspective of symbolic interactionism and centers on a direct critique of Mead’s anthropocentric discounting of animal abilities. Key recent examples are Clinton Sanders’s (1999, 2003) research with dog owners, Gene Myers’s (1998) study of the interactions between children and animals in a preschool program, and Janet and Steven Alger’s (2003a) book on a cat shelter. These writers examine the intersubjectivity that emerges when people routinely interact with animals; the process by which people construct an understanding of the individuality, emotionality, and identity of animal others; and, in turn, how association with animals shapes the identities of human actors.

The sociological work on everyday interactions between people and animals has already had considerable impact on social psychological conceptions of mind as interactionist sociologists have sought to establish an orientation toward mind that de-emphasizes this view of mindedness as a linguistic phenomenon and returns to an understanding of mind as the outcome of social interaction and social experience. Basing their discussions on the prior work of researchers who have examined the interactional worlds of people with Alzheimer’s disease (Gubrium 1986), those with severe physical and mental disabilities (Bogdan and Taylor 1989; Goode 1994), and infants (Stern 1985), sociological psychologists involved in human-animal studies have called into question the centrality of language use to mindedness and have emphasized the interactional process of “doing mind” (Dutton and Williams 2004; Sanders 1993). As Dutton and Williams (2004) observe,

The attribution of meaning or intention to behavior hinges crucially on the extent to which such behavior is considered meaningful *within the context of the social relationship*. Social relationships actually provide rather clear conditions and parameters for what constitutes “mindful” behavior in

contrast to those behaviors that do not seem to merit an intentional explanation because they seem inappropriate within the context of relationship. . . . To see [doing mind] as simply folk psychology or a useful social heuristic, would be to ignore the importance of the social relationship in structuring and scaffolding intersubjective understanding. (Pp. 215–16)

Mind, therefore, as it arises from shared experience, is cast as an element of the meaning structure that those who interact with alingual others devise in understanding and constructing their interactions. Caretakers of animals, such as those who routinely interact with the severely disabled, infants, and Alzheimer’s patients, construct a “theory of mind” that allows them to understand the thinking, emotions, preferences, desires, and intentions of the other (see Alger and Alger 1997; Cox and Ashford 1998; Myers 1998:99–102; Sanders 1993).

Leslie Irvine’s (2003, 2004a, 2004b) recent work builds on and extends this intersubjective focus by presenting a case for animals possessing a self. Basing her analysis on the work of William James and studies of prelingual infants (principally, Stern 1985), Irvine makes the case for the animal self as being constituted by a sense of *agency* (being the author of one’s action), a sense of *coherence* (understanding one’s physical self as the locus of agency), a sense of *affectivity* (experiencing feelings associated with the self), and a sense of *self-history* (maintaining an understanding of continuity in the midst of change). Irvine (2004a) concludes that the self is

a system of goals, which we pursue through relationships and experiences, which involves the ways in which we respond to and order the worlds around us. Framed in this way, animals, like people, manifest evidence of selfhood. Interaction reveals features of a “core self” among animals as they manifest agency, affectivity, history, and coherence, as well as the capacity for intersubjectivity. (Pp. 172–73)

## PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

As a relatively new substantive area within sociology, the study of human-animal interaction offers a wide variety of alternatives for future research. Since many of the extant discussions are focused on people’s everyday relationships with cats and dogs—the animals most commonly incorporated into households—studies of relationships with “exotic” animals such as ferrets, potbelly pigs, reptiles, insects, and rabbits would be new and instructive. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the foregoing, the dominant focus of human-animal sociology has been on relationships with companion animals. Consequently, there is considerable opportunity for researchers to explore interactions with other types of animals. Thus far there has only been limited sociological attention to wild animals (Dizard 1994; Kalof and Fitzgerald 2003; Scarce 2000); farm animals and livestock (Brandt 2004; Wilkie 2004; Wipper 2000); animals in zoos, circuses, and other leisure settings

(Case 1991; Lawrence 1982; Malamud 1998); and animals involved in blood sports (Darden and Worden 1996; Marvin 1988). There are also a number of unexplored animal-related occupations (e.g., the work of veterinary technicians, wildlife rehabilitators, zookeepers, professional dog handlers, animal behavior consultants, circus personnel, and K-9 police) available for fruitful investigation. Finally, as Arnold Arluke (2003) has recently observed, sociologists now have amassed sufficient basic understanding of human-animal interaction to begin to *apply* this knowledge in an attempt to effectively deal with problems in urban human-animal relations, veterinary medicine, animal control activities, and other settings and exchanges that constitute the “dark side” of this key form of social interaction.<sup>8</sup>

Despite continuing resistance, the study of nonhuman animals and people’s relationships with them is a growing and exciting field within contemporary sociology. In attending to the “zoological connection,” academic sociology is encouraged to acknowledge that we live in “mixed species societies” in which human-animal relationships play a central role. The topical area has already expanded, and will continue to extend, sociology’s substantive and theoretical understanding of social processes, interactions, and relationships “driven by the insight that other animals are always human cultural constructions.”<sup>9</sup> By continuing to move nonhuman animals into the realm of “sociological visibility” (Oakley 1974:5), we can enrich the sociological enterprise and gain a better understanding of what it is to be human.

# ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

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**E**thnomethodology (EM) and conversation analysis (CA) challenge the traditional perspective of the normative constitution of social action. Conventional sociological research has largely traded on the distinction between basis and superstructure. The regularities of action were to be explained vis-à-vis the dispositions and expectations the actors are subject to (Wilson 1970). Instead of seeking for the underlying normative structures, EM and CA focus on the orderliness of actions as their emergent property. They respecify the locus of social order. Both EM and CA examine the practices people are busy with in producing social actions that are regular and recognizable parts of cultural and social processes. For them, the orderliness of social actions is not to be found beneath the surface of action but in the actions and interactions ordinary members of society are involved in. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) have summarized this perspective as follows:

We have proceeded under the assumption (an assumption borne out by our research) that in so far as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only to us, indeed not in the first place for us, but for the co-participants who had produced them. If the materials (records of natural conversation) were orderly, they were so because they had been methodically produced by members of the society for one another, and it was a feature of the conversations we treated as data that they were produced so as to allow the display by the co-participants to each other of their orderliness, and to allow the participants to display to each other their analysis, appreciation and use of the orderliness. (P. 290)

EM and CA provide a way to study mundane social matters as achievements. The topics of EM studies vary from the interaction patterns of aboriginals (Liberman 1985) to proving mathematical theorems (Livingston 1986) but are unified by their focus on the details of the accomplishment of the action. CA targets the foundational role of talk and interaction for social action, both in everyday and institutional settings.

## ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Harold Garfinkel, Michael Lynch, and Erik Livingston (1981) tell the following story about the origins of the idea of EM:

In 1954 Fred Strodbeck was hired by the University of Chicago Law School to analyse tape-recordings of jury deliberations obtained from a bugged jury room. Edward Shils was on the committee that hired him. When Strodbeck proposed to administer Bales Interaction Process Analysis categories, Shils complained: "By using Bales Interaction Process Analysis I'm sure we'll learn what about a jury's deliberations makes them a small group. But we want to know what about their deliberations makes them a jury." (P. 133)

Garfinkel's (1967) EM developed a response to Shils's complaint. It began investigating the properties of reasoning and practical action that are the participants' ways of producing this activity. The aim of EM distinguishes it from the standard science that surveys general and average



properties of the phenomena. EM tries to catch the defining features, the “just whatness” of mundane activities that makes them what they are; that is, what the methods, means, and procedures are through which an activity such as jury deliberation is being done (Francis and Hester 2004).

EM draws its inspiration from the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl and Schutz (Heritage 1984:37–74), transposing phenomenological inquiries about the appearance of phenomena in the world onto studies of the members’ methods of doing *being-in-the-world*. The spectrum of EM studies may seem confusing. Research covers topics from jazz improvisation (Sudnow 1978), snitching and moral order at a halfway house (Wieder 1974), to “doing being ordinary” (Sacks 1992b:215–21; for further studies, see Garfinkel 1986, 2002). All the studies concentrate on the methods of *doing*, if nothing else, than just *doing being ordinary*, how people manage their conduct to give an impression of being more or less like everybody else. Ordinariness is not to be seen as a statistical average but as a skilled achievement.

The key for EM is the topic/resource shift (Zimmerman and Pollner 1970). The reservoir of tacit everyday knowledge normally taken for granted by the social sciences is to be opened up to research. The fundamental properties of social action should become the object of study, through which EM aims at respecifying the foundations of social actions by analyzing situated practices at the face-to-face level (Button 1991). The central EM research assumption is that the meaning of a social phenomenon is equivalent to methodical procedures through which participants sustain its sense. Garfinkel (1967) suggests that for EM, “their central recommendation is that the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘account-able’” (p. 1). Accountability is a central notion for EM. That is, the methods whereby members render and make their experiences accountable are the methods whereby they maintain the social order for which they are accountable. This “reflexive” and “incarnate” character of the production of social order inevitably makes members’ methods and their commonsense a rich and profound topic both for themselves and for research.

Other aspects of the EM program are related to the notion of accountable action. Consequently, social order is not given but something that participants work to achieve. Nor are the meanings of language or social actions given, but context bound, deriving from their context of production. Finally, rules and regularities are resources for interpretations that guide the participants as sources of understanding, not external forces that mechanically compel actors. In any case, the idea is not to deny the existence of power relations but to acknowledge that, whatever the social relationships are, they are subject to procedures and methods of reasoning. EM refuses to treat human beings as “judgmental dopes,” which is one of its best-known slogans.

From the outset, the breaching experiments, in which Garfinkel (1963, 1967:38–47) instructed an experimenter to behave in some ordinary situation in inappropriate and, by common standards, senseless ways, made EM (in)famous. The experiments also highlighted the notion of accountability. In these experiments, the subjects “vigorously sought to make the strange actions intelligible and to restore the situation to normal appearances” (Garfinkel 1967:47). These experiments demonstrated the participants’ use of commonsense expectations, their accounting practices, and the resulting moral force of cognition.

In more detail, Garfinkel’s (1967) breaching experiments reveal the generic reflexive accountability of social actions. In the experiment in which the experimenter asked a subject to clarify the meaning of his or her commonplace remarks such as “how are you” or “I am tired,” the subjects actually produced a wide range of responses. On some occasions, it was understood as an insult: “Look! I was just trying to be polite. Frankly, I don’t give a damn how you are.” (p. 47); it could also be heard as a question: “I don’t know, I guess physically, mainly” (p. 43); or it could be seen as one in a series thereby formulating the clarification requests into a larger activity: “Why are you asking me such silly questions?” (p. 44).

The responses generated in the experiment are not only realized by reference to the existing context but themselves contribute toward the context for every “next” action (Heritage 1984:242). In this vein, the orderliness extends to “order at all points,” where each next action takes place in the context to which sense it contributes (Sacks 1992a:484). That is, the responses contextualize clarification requests in various ways as insults, sincere questions, or parts of a larger activity. Consequently, the responses contribute reflexively toward the understanding of the prior action and, furthermore, create expectations concerning the next action.

## LATER DEVELOPMENT IN ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

From the outset, EM developed in two main directions. Harvey Sacks and his colleagues continued classical ethnomethodological studies in the mid-1960s and initiated a research program that was to be called conversation analysis (to be discussed later). Harold Garfinkel envisioned further development of EM in the 1960s that later was termed “radical” (Lynch 1993; Rawls 2002; Wilson 2003).

Radical EM started to mature within a distinct program of “studies of work” in the 1970s. These studies analyze the specific, actual material practices that compose the ongoing situated day-to-day work practices (Heritage 1984:293). In all, they promised a rigorous analysis of materialized competencies of work activities in real time and in real settings (Lynch 1993). The themes of these studies include the achievement of teamwork, the role and uses of artifacts for work practices, and the spatial

organization of the workplace. EM studies have opened up the artful, interactional practices of teamwork, as well as being concerned with roles and uses of artifacts serving as a resource for carrying out work tasks. They have shown how the coordination of work is supported by artifacts, such as procedural diagrams, maps, job descriptions, and project plans. Furthermore, EM studies acknowledge the relevance and constitutive role of spatial arrangement of the workplace for the organization of activities.

The program of studies of work has culminated in science studies (Garfinkel et al. 1981; Lynch 1985, 1993) and in so-called technomethodology, which applies EM to the design of information technology. In their article titled "Technomethodology," Dourish and Button (1998) investigate the possibilities and consequences of approaching system design from the ethnomethodological perspective. Ultimately, they seek to establish for technomethodology "a foundational place in the very notion of system design, rather than simply being employed as a resource in aspects of the process, such as requirements elicitation and specification." For example, Dourish and Button introduce the notion of accountability for systems designers. In fact, they invented an accountable computer. A word-processing application can be seen as an abstracted representation of code. When we click "save" we do not know which bit of code is operating. However, if the relationship between the representation and the code was accountable, the user would get a better insight into how the system was operating. The program in use would allow to see, as any programmer could, which bits of code were related to which operations. This could be used for reprogramming by revealing what became invisible in the initial programming (Dourish and Button 1998; see also Dourish 2001; Crabtree 2003). In all, EM has regained a prominent position in science and technology studies, which has also had a profound impact on research methods, as the ironical review title by Latour (1986) suggests, "Will the last person to leave the social studies of science please turn on the tape-recorder?"

More theoretically, all later EM is based on what Garfinkel calls a rendering theorem (Garfinkel 2002: 135–37), which claims that (social) scientific activities can be described using the following theorem:

$$[ ] \rightarrow ( ),$$

where  $[ ]$  stands for the all social practices, which are made exactly what they are by exactly those methods and means they have to carry out these practices for whatever purposes they have. The term  $\rightarrow$  designates the operations social scientists carry out for their own purposes to describe and explain the members' practices. The term  $( )$  is the findings of the social sciences, a description of the society (see Garfinkel 2002:135–37). Thus, social sciences provide a theoretical, constructed version of the social world.

In particular, the later version of Garfinkel's EM (1996, 2002) has been interested in the "what more" there is to the

findings of social science. In this fashion, Garfinkel has defined the task of EM as recovering phenomena of the social world that the social sciences, by his definition, have lost. According to Garfinkel (1996), for the social sciences "there is no order in the concreteness of things" (p. 7). "The FA [formal analytic<sup>1</sup>] procedure ignores the enacted, unmediated, directly and immediately witnessable details of immortal ordinary society" (p. 8). In contrast, radical EM studies enacted local practices that "are in detail identical with themselves, and not representative of something else" (p. 8).

The exclusive focus on the actual situated order of the social world is the defining feature of radical EM. The exclusive emphasis on "just thisness," the unique features, and lived sense of the activity define EM in a contrast to normal social science. Radical EM promises to offer "something more" to ordinary science, having delineated itself as a complement to mainstream science. However, it risks losing its capacity to communicate its findings to other scientists through the very skill of acquiring "something more." Button (1991:XI–XII) complained that ethnomethodological respecification of the foundations of social sciences had been overlooked, ignored, or misunderstood. For instance, EM is usually considered as a narrow "microdiscipline," whereas EM itself considers the very foundations of social order and sees the micro/macro split as just another invented construction. Nevertheless, EM may have become an asymmetrical alternative to the contemporary worldwide social science movement (to borrow Garfinkel's [1996, 2002] own terminology). However, various branches of ethnomethodological research may have established different relations with mainstream social sciences. Conversation analysts tend to emphasize that they have opened up new areas for research that had been neglected. They can claim to form, broaden, detail, and also correct previous understandings of social practices (Peräkylä and Vehviläinen 2003) but do not set themselves up as an exclusive contrast to normal sciences.

## CONVERSATION ANALYSIS

CA originally emerged as an offshoot of EM that has developed into a systematic study of all interactional social behavior, which typically includes talk<sup>2</sup> (Silverman 1998; ten Have 1999). CA argues that everyday talk forms the foundation for intersubjective understanding of social actions (Heritage 1984). Hence, the study of talk itself becomes the basis of social analysis. CA ultimately attempts to go beyond commonsense through a more fine-grained analysis of (verbal) coordination of social actions than social actors can articulate at the level of mundane reasoning.

The emphasis on studying talk as a way of *doing* links CA to EM. CA also shares with EM many background principles (Clayman and Maynard 1995). The meaning of a social phenomenon is seen as equivalent to the

methodical procedures through which participants sustain its sense. Language use and social actions are considered indexical, since their understanding is bound to the context of their achievement. Social order as a whole is viewed as the participants' practical, methodical achievement in contrast to hidden, underlying structures. Rules and regularities are considered as resources serving the participants as sources of understanding. The accountability of actions forms their constraint; the norms as such do not force people mechanically.

The distinctiveness of CA as a social scientific approach emerges from its topic. CA investigates turns at talk and interactional moves in their sequences. It inspects the ways in which a turn at talk treats a previous one and what implications this poses for the succeeding turns. For CA, talk-and-action-in-interaction is a sufficient object for analysis in itself rather than a window on larger social processes or as a medium for data collection (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998:21). CA data-collection methods rely on the tape-recording of actual interactions, which emphasizes that social interaction is an autonomous reality *sui generis*. Traditionally, sociologists have not found talk relevant nor have they been equipped to deal with it. The use of naturally occurring interaction is also critical for the reliability of CA, which analyzes real-life instances of interactions, since memorized or invented examples tend to lose or transpose significant details.

CA originated from Harvey Sacks's (1992a, 1992b) reflection of the idea that talk is not just a string of propositions, but a methodical means of accomplishing actions. In 1963, Sacks worked with Garfinkel at the Center for the Scientific Study of Suicide at UCLA. For their study, they recorded a set of calls to a suicide prevention center, not yet knowing what to do with them. They knew that one of the call takers' tasks was to try to obtain the caller's name, but in the interest of caution about not losing the caller, the call takers avoided asking the caller's name directly. Usually, they were successful in getting the caller's name by giving their name first. But then Sacks came across one particular call opening (Sacks 1992a:6; for discussion, see Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998:18–20; Silverman 1998: 98–99; ten Have 1999:13–15):

A: This is Mr. Smith, may I help you.

B: I can't hear you.

A: This is Mr. *Smith*.

B: *Smith*.

Here, B, the caller, reports a hearing problem. Consequently, the place for a reciprocal giving of names never occurs. Once the caller had shown that he had solved his hearing problem by repeating the call taker's name, the call taker was no longer in a position to say his name to invite the caller to reciprocate. Subsequently, the call taker could acknowledge the caller's hearing with an item, such as

"yes," and/or return to the opening of activity "may I help you." Unfortunately, Sacks did not show how this call went on, because the methodological canon of CA had not yet been established. The continuation of the call would have made his argument transparent, which is ideal for CA research. However, the other documented calls in Sacks's corpus support his analysis of this call (Sacks 1992a: 6–76). The reporting of a hearing problem seems to have, in effect, allowed the caller to "avoid giving his name without refusing to do so."

Thus, Sacks encountered a puzzle. Was this trajectory just an accident, or was it an achievement? At this point, a "wild" possibility struck him. Could the minutiae talk be composed of methodical ways of doing things? Following and developing Garfinkel's line of thought, Sacks started to build a sequential understanding of language use. Could talk consist of methods and procedures through which actions were performed? Was reporting a hearing problem a methodical means of "avoiding giving your name without refusing to do so?" Sacks soon started to apply his new reasoning procedure to other materials he had. His lectures from 1964 (Sacks 1992a) bring us back to his ideas, such as "how to get someone's name without asking for it" (give yours), "how to avoid giving help without refusing to give it" (treat the circumstance as a joke), "how to get help for suicidality without requesting it" (ask "how does this organization work"), etc.

It then took about 10 years for the key ideas of CA to become crystallized. This early development took place largely through collaboration between Gail Jefferson, Emanuel Schegloff, and Harvey Sacks. The early CA culminated in the publication of a paper on turn-taking in conversation by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson in 1974. The era of early CA ended tragically, when Sacks was killed in a car accident in 1975.

As a whole, the studies of social interaction have established face-to-face behavior as an emergent social fact. Harvey Sacks (1992a, 1992b) formulated this in his famous term "order-at-all-points," which still guides CA research. It suggests approaching social interaction as a systematically organized whole in which even the smallest details may be relevant and should not be neglected a priori. This allowed Sacks and his colleagues to formulate interaction as an emergent order and as a new autonomous field of study (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974).

CA approaches talk and actions in interaction as sequentially organized and ordered. The relationships between turns and actions in interaction are considered the key resource both for participants and analysts. The sense of ongoing action is created and deciphered by the positioning of turns and moves in interaction. Contributions in interaction are sequentially implicative, delimiting the possible next contributions by making some types of action conditionally relevant.<sup>3</sup> The turns and actions in interaction form their own context in an endogenous, orderly manner. The validity of CA research consists in showing how

participants orient to this sequential order and how they realize the normative orderliness of social actions through their orientation. Indeed, participants treat the orderly course of interaction as a normative standard, so that departures from regulative patterns of interaction become sanctioned. The very institution of talk-in-interaction is reflexively maintained through the accountability of deviations from the orderly courses of interaction.

In all, the organization of interaction consists of not only the syntactic, semantic, and prosodic qualities through which turns are designed but also the pragmatic connections through which turns are interlocked. Furthermore, these concerns interplay with normative and inferential properties of talk that allow participants to orient to the sense and implications of their interaction (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998:39). This multilayered orderliness makes talk a “deep” object; it can look trivial and insignificant from one angle but become relevant from another. This methodological canon not only enables unlimited new findings but also makes the research a never-ending process. CA can be considered as the reverse engineering<sup>4</sup> of the immense complex of intersubjective architecture of the social world. To decipher this enigmatic structure requires a genuine craftsmanship from the analyst for observing, describing, detailing, and systematizing this fractal-like multiplicity.<sup>5</sup>

In the final instance, CA investigates social actions. Schegloff (1991:46) and Peräkylä (1995:17) have pointed out that talk amounts to action. Through talk participants create and sustain the sense of what is going on and what they are doing. Talk is the primordial site at and through which the actors express their understanding of the ongoing event, and negotiate their division of roles for participation in it. Indeed, talk amounts to action. Talk and social actions are not two separate plenums, talk being the medium for orchestrating activities. Talk makes the sense of the social activities intersubjectively available.

## KEY IDEAS AND FINDINGS

The central findings of CA concern the organization of ordinary conversation and the accomplishment of task-oriented, institutional interactions. Early CA concentrated on the study of mundane, ordinary interactions. It has shown that everyday talk is not a mess but an orderly event that forms the basis for the organization of social action. The organization of ordinary conversation consists of orderly practices, such as turn-taking, adjacency pairs, preference organization, and repair (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998; ten Have 1999). On the other hand, the analysis of talk-in-interaction has shown that the patterns of interaction are the participants’ key resource in achieving institutional activities. Institutional settings, such as courtrooms, classrooms and ceremonies, are composed of characteristic forms of interaction. Studies of institutional interaction aim at specifying the actual format through which the

institutional practices are accomplished (Drew and Heritage 1992; Arminen 2005a).

Turn-taking is a fundamental phenomenon in social interaction, the basic mechanism for organizing all types of talk-in-interaction (Sacks et al. 1974). Turn-taking is based on turns at talk that are composed of *turn constructional units*. These vary from single-word constructions (“right,” “okay,” etc.) to complex sentences, but they always constitute the first possible place for the turn completion. In everyday conversation, turn-taking takes place on a turn-by-turn basis so that after each completed turn a speaker arrives at the point of a possible speaker change. Initially, a speaker is entitled only to one turn construction unit at a time. Complex turns demand extra effort to skip the projected completion and continue beyond the completion point.

Turn-taking alone does not form a sufficient basis for social interaction. Parties in interaction accomplish actions with the help of the organized ways in which turns at talk are linked to each other. Ultimately, the sequential linkages between turns at talk are based on adjacency and adjacency pairs, such as greetings (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). The simple basic idea of adjacency pairs, as already mentioned, is that a question invites an answer; a greeting invites a greeting. The notion of the sequential organization of talk is critical for understanding the organization of social actions, because the details of talk gain meaning through their placement in sequences that are part of larger courses of action. The sequential organization of turns engages parties in social actions. The production of the first part of an adjacency pair, such as a question, ties the targeted recipient to the production of the second part of the pair, an answer, and the expectation of social action is created. A departure from the sanctioned course of action is possible but accountable. The matrix for the analysis of social actions is here.

Preference organization connects interaction in the emerging larger orders of social solidarity (Heritage 1984:265–80). The design of action enables the formation of social solidarity through the preference organization. In the organization of adjacent actions there is a bias toward *preferred* responses. Requests, offers, invitations, and proposals, among others, allow acceptance or refusal. It has been shown that preferred responses, acceptances mostly, tend to be produced immediately and economically. Dispreferred responses, refusals, tend to involve delays, additional speech particles, and explanations/reasons for refusal. The organization of talk-in-interaction not only favors social solidarity but also enables the emergence of conflict if parties deviate from the expectations based on the preference organization.

Finally, speech also includes an inbuilt mechanism for tackling troubles and difficulties in uttering, hearing, and understanding of talk (Schegloff, Jefferson, and Sacks 1977). Repairs cover a broader range of activities than mere correction of errors. A repairable<sup>6</sup> item of talk does not necessarily include any kind of error; the repair itself

characterizes some earlier stretch of talk as being repairable. Repairs, thus, embody the reflexive nature of talk-in-interaction. They are not only made in a context but also form it. That is, they both sustain and shape the context they orient to and are part of. Hence, repairs clarify misunderstandings, build sequential connections, and mend breakdowns in intersubjectivity. They form the last defense of intersubjective orderliness of social actions (Schegloff 1992). In all, they carry social significance because of their reflexive, context-renewing nature.

The deliberately narrow focus on “trivial,” ordinary interaction enabled CA to discover the elementary invariances of social interaction on which all forms of social action are built. However, CA was interested in the organization of social actions in interaction, not conversational talk only. CA simply has a particular way of investigating social actions from the sequential point of view, disclosing the composition, meaning, and tacit rationality of social actions. As a whole, it has opened a new field of social sciences that analyzes the interactional patterns and their contribution to social actions in all sort of settings.

In the 1970s, CA extended to interaction in institutional contexts, in which the interacting parties orient to the goal-rational, institutionalized nature of their action. Early on, CA had pointed out that interaction in institutional settings is somehow specialized and different from mundane interaction. In their paper on turn-taking, Sacks et al. (1974) sketched the possibility of doing comparative studies on different systems of turn-taking. They noted that in contrast to everyday interactions, many institutional occasions, such as courtrooms, classrooms, and ceremonies, had predesigned turn order that served the institutional task in question. This idea paved the way to the emergence of the studies on institutional interaction that specify the format through which each institutional practice is realized.

The studies on institutional interaction focus on questions of what talk and interaction do in goal-oriented settings, that is, institutional environments. The analytical aim is to specify how the parties’ orientation to a context becomes consequential for their conduct (Schegloff 1991). In other words, CA does not presuppose that a context such as a medical, therapeutic, or legal institution is an external constraint that restricts the participants automatically. For instance, a doctor, a therapist, or an attorney may have institutional power, but it must be exercised and made consequential in interaction with clients. The studies on institutional interaction may discern how institutional realities are sustained and managed and institutional power exercised. Interaction may be highly consequential for the parties; for example, in courtrooms where competing strategic verbal performances are used to credit and discredit a case (Drew 1992); calls for emergency services may routinely initiate a service delivery but may also fail with fateful consequences (Whalen, Zimmerman, and Whalen 1988). Talk in institutional settings is not an innocuous side aspect but a medium of action and power. CA does not deny the existence of power but studies its exercise (Hutchby 1996).

This may also offer an opportunity to reflect on power relationships and sometimes contest them.

Studies of institutional interaction have become a strong tradition (Boden and Zimmerman 1991; Drew and Heritage 1992; Arminen 2005a), which follows Sacks’s original idea of studying members’ methodical ways of accomplishing social tasks in interaction. Through the examination of institutional patterns of interaction, the achievement of institutional tasks, identities, and inferences can be elaborated. Eventually, the studies on institutional interaction concern the strategic aspects of interaction, the ways in which collaboration is achieved, and the procedures whereby the differing perspectives of the participants are brought into alignment at least momentarily. In particular, CA has become influential within medical interactions through its descriptions of medical practices, which have had an impact on communication training of doctors (Heritage and Maynard 2006). CA has also addressed numerous other institutional fields, such as education, law, and the media.

The study of institutional interaction is based on the comparisons between institutional practices and their counterparts in everyday interactions. This comparative approach allows specifying the particularities of institutional practices amounting to a strict methodological policy. The studies determine how institutional speech events differ from generic forms of mundane interaction and identify the resources and techniques that accomplish the departures from generic forms of interaction. As a whole, the task of studies on institutional interaction is to explore the ways in which talk-and-action-in-interaction is specialized, simplified, reduced, or otherwise adapted to institutional goals.

CA can increase our understanding of institutional practices by respecifying their interactional substratum and thus shape, broaden, detail, and even correct our understanding of institutional practices (Peräkylä and Vehviläinen 2003). The most general principles of CA apply to the scrutiny of institutional interactions and practices, but a separate set of concerns comes into a play when the focus is particularly on the *institutional* nature of interaction. The analyst has to demonstrate how the context affects a particular aspect or a segment of interaction, thus allowing an examination of the role the institution has in and for the interaction in the setting. Schegloff (1991) has called this “defining the procedural relevance of context,” which is practiced to provide criteria against arbitrary interpretations of the meaning of context. This means that the “relevance to the parties” is taken as the guarantee of the “relevance for the analyst” to specify how the orientation to a context becomes consequential for the participants’ conduct. The goal is to show and detail the procedural connection between the context and talk in action through comparison between “sequences-of-that-sort” in the institutional and mundane contexts to identify the characteristics of sequences of talk in each context. The analyst aims at reverse engineering the actors’ techniques,

methods, and procedures through which the context is reflexively constituted in the first place. In this fashion, studies of institutional interaction concentrate on *doing*, on finding out how institutional realities are obtained and continuously updated.

## FUSIONS AND REDEVELOPMENTS

In the 1990s, EM and CA have not only matured but also diversified into many specialized subfields. New synthetic lines of thought have also emerged, one of which has become known as workplace studies. This offers a new synthesis combining the methods of EM, CA, and ethnography.

Originally, this line of research was pioneered by Lucy Suchman (1987). The topic of her investigation, the user's interaction with an "intelligent" photocopier, may sound trivial at first. However, her exposition of human-machine communication not only illuminates the properties of interaction between a human and a "smart" machine but also compares human and computational logic. Since it succeeds in shedding light on distinctive features of human communication in contrast to computational systems, Suchman's study is fascinating not just for those interested in interactions with technologies but also for those who seek to understand human behavior and the mind. Suchman also makes a significant methodological contribution. Her study is a misleadingly easy mix of the use of background knowledge of the intelligent properties of the machine (computerized system), an ethnomethodological account of situated human reasoning, and a conversation analytical explication of the sequential flow of human-machine interaction. This synthesis of EM, CA, and ethnography later became known as workplace studies.

Workplace studies are a naturalistic approach committed to the detailed study of work practices, disclosing the reasoning and procedures through which work tasks are carried out. This research considers the production and coordination of workplace activities in real-time interaction through talk and visual conduct (Heath and Luff 2000; Luff, Hindmarsh, and Heath 2000) and analyzing coordination of work both in face-to-face (inter)action and between distant parties, mainly through various technological means. Typically, the analysis of work activities is based on ethnography and video recordings. The ethnographic materials provide background for a more detailed inspection of videotaped work practices. The aim of using several data sets is to achieve a productive analytical circle in which recorded details are interpreted in their ethnographic context, which itself is elaborated by reference to the inspection of actual interaction. Video recordings permit testing the validity of ethnographic insights and provide reportable evidence of instances of the practices researched.

The analysis of videotapes unites the study of spoken interaction with visually observable physical actions. Talk

is studied with the help of CA transcription conventions and methods, and visual actions are inspected along with the stream of speech, which discloses the sequential flow of work activities. These studies reverse engineer the building blocks of the intersubjective understanding of work practices in action in which the parties' coordination of their activities itself displays their sense of practice. The approach shares the fundamentals of EM, including the notion that the contributions to actions are contextually oriented and structurally organized. Each activity is positioned vis-à-vis previous activities, thereby displaying the actor's interpretation of the stage and sense of action. *Order at all point* also exists at work. Consequently, no detail of (inter)action at the work site should be neglected as irrelevant or accidental a priori. For instance, one of the earliest workplace studies, which is about medical practices, found that a certain amount of idiosyncrasy and messiness in traditional doctors' records was not an obstacle to transmitting information but a means of conveying the doctor's own medical sense-making process (see Heath and Luff 2000). Subsequently, the replacement of paper records with digitalized records lost these subtle, tacit means of communication irrecoverably. This study illuminated the ways in which medical records were used in practice and in encounters with patients. This understanding surpassed the practitioners' own understanding of details of their practice, because small details such as making notes or reading records while interacting with patients are largely practical matters that escape conscious attention. Yet these kinds of tacit practices form "an essential and accountable feature of everyday professional medical work" (p. 58).

A growing number of workplace studies have dealt with coordination centers such as emergency dispatch centers, the control rooms of rapid urban transport systems, and air traffic and ground control centers. These studies have focused on collaboration in the use of various tools and technologies to respond to normal, natural troubles and difficulty in maintaining schedules and coordinating activities in complex settings. Some studies have also addressed work practices in corporations such as financial institutions, newsrooms, medical settings or in call centers and at help desks. Other topics have included the work activities of train drivers or pilots in real or simulated settings. In principle, any work practice can be studied but interactive technologies, responsibilities for a large number of people, high work intensity, or the potential for fatal errors pose both practical and theoretical questions that are worth particular scrutiny. These studies have been relevant for the emergence of the new applied field called computer-supported cooperative work.

Another new emerging synthetic approach is a discursive psychology that started as a branch of discourse analysis (Edwards and Potter 1992, 2001; Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998:202–28) but has recently become increasingly close to CA. Discursive psychology addresses traditional cognitive and epistemological concerns but focuses on their

interactional constituents. Its typical questions concern issues such as how the factuality of statements is designed in interaction or what techniques speakers use to preempt a recipient's skepticism. Discursive psychology challenges traditional cognitive sciences as well as profound philosophical questions dating back to Descartes's division between body and mind (te Molder and Potter 2005). The question concerning the interactional basis of the psyche is a fine example of the further development of a scientific field. In the 1970s, CA was established as an independent field of its own. Now CA methodology is applied to new areas, challenging traditional notions such as the autonomy of the mental apparatus.

## CHALLENGES

EM and CA were among pioneering approaches in the 1950s and 1960s that attempted systematically to open new microdomains for research. Heritage (1984:291) has argued that CA represents a further extension of EM in both scope and detail. From his point of view, CA studies the mediation of agency and structure. One of the best-known developments in this area is Anthony Giddens's (1984) theory of structuration that builds on some ethnomethodological underpinnings, though it synthesized them with other approaches. CA can be seen as a general theory of social action (Schegloff 1987). However, a number of critics have not been convinced of this and have continued to call CA "micro," "molecular," "narrow," and "internalist" (Lynch 1993; Wetherell 1998; Billig 1999). The refusal of CA practitioners to be involved in the micro/macro split has also been largely dismissed. If CA is discussed in the context of social science and theory, it is generally seen as a narrow microperspective. Moreover, there is antagonism between EM and CA, some ethnomethodologists claiming that CA has developed into a narrow technical field that has lost its social relevance (Pollner 1991; Lynch 1993). As a whole, all the approaches called "micro" are still largely dismissed simply as irrelevant as a result of their lack of focus on large societal structures.

Some CA and EM practitioners have recently addressed these criticisms and considered social action in a broader context than EM and CA traditionally have. The new approaches include workplace studies, as already mentioned, and studies that examine the relationship between talk and other actions (Goodwin 1994, 2000; Neville 2004; Arminen 2005b). These approaches seem to have adopted aspects of activity theory to address social actions more distinctly and do not prioritize the communication between agents (cf. Engeström and Middleton 1996). In general, talk and other actions inform each other in the ongoing accomplishment of the task that they are contributing to. It is not talk as such but the coordination of talk and action that establishes the sense of the ongoing action (Goodwin 2000).

Research into social actions demonstrates that talk is not "just talk" for parties in action. Talk is both consequential for the further development of the ongoing action and is also preconditioned by the nature of ongoing activity. The analysis of social action should not artificially concentrate on "talk itself" but should grasp the totality of talk-and-action-in-interaction. In fact, many individual studies have already addressed talk vis-à-vis the ongoing embodied action (Goodwin 2000; Neville 2004; Arminen 2005b). Goodwin (1994) presented a highly interesting analysis of the role of talk and action in the well-publicized trial of Rodney King, showing how the coordination of expert talk in relation to the videotape on the beating of King enabled the expert witness to construct a live demonstration of the innocence of police officers beating him. The prosecutors had believed that the amateur photographer's videotape as such would show the guilt of the police officers. The skillful expert witness, however, was able to make the audience believe that the three police officers were just justifiably defending themselves against the violent aggressor (whom they were beating with batons).

In more theoretical terms, we can distinguish sequential and sequence organization. The former is a broader term that concerns ordering and the relative positioning of any kind of actions, moves, and utterances. Sequence organization concerns courses of action that have been realized through talk only, being a subset of sequential order. Thus far, no systematic theory about their relationship has yet been formulated. A further development in this area would enable a more comprehensive understanding of talk-and-action-in-interaction both for themselves and for other social and cultural structures.

Ultimately, this line of research may revitalize Sacks's original vision (1992a, 1992b) of the science of social life. Initially, CA started to develop from Sacks's contemplation of the broader idea of the science of social life that would reconstruct and analyze the practices that permit members of society to see and grasp things the way they do (Arminen 2005a). Following Garfinkel's idea of EM, the aim was to move beyond relying on "what everybody knows." Instead, the most basic elements of action-in-interaction that allow parties to establish the ideas they have were to be scrutinized (Sacks 1992b:26; Silverman 1998:53–56). The goal was to build a science that could deal with the actual details of actions to reverse engineer the constitutive elements of the phenomenon in society (Sacks 1992a:27). The reproducibility of findings was considered as the basis for the scientific analysis of the social world. Ideally, the reader would gain as much information as the researcher so that the analysis could be reproduced (Sacks 1992a:27; Silverman 1998:53–56). However, Sacks was not interested in narrowing down the scope of studies to details of interaction only, seeing his research as about conversations only incidentally. Conversation is something that one can get actual instances of on tape. The reproducibility of details of actual events was critical simply because it made the science of social life possible (Sacks 1992b:26).

Further studies on the relationship between sequential order and sequence structure would be welcome both from sociological and ethnomethodological viewpoints. From a sociological point of view, it is essential to relate the role of talk-in-interaction to the emergence of social and cultural structures other than the talk itself (cf. ten Have 2002). From an EM/CA perspective, the separation of talk from other activities performed via various other media involves the risk of missing details of the parties' ongoing orientation to action (Arminen 2005b). For instance, it has turned out that the novelties of mobile phone talk concern its sequential properties. If somebody asks directions by mobile phone while driving a car, or answers a mobile while in the toilet of the train, the emerging contingencies and features of interaction are inseparable from the embodied action. Furthermore, the noticeable difference in responses to mechanical landline telephone summonses and identity-information conveying mobile phone summonses shows that people orient to media other than talk and to their communicative relevance in ways that are directly consequential for the action-in-interaction (Arminen and Leinonen 2006).

Finally, though the sequential organization of social action is a broader domain of scrutiny than the sequence organization of talk, it does not need to be less strict and rigorous. On the contrary, subtle nuances of sequences of mobile phone talk, for example, are related to its mobility as a new type of sequential context (Arminen 2005b). The prosody of answers to summonses and the reconfiguration of greeting exchanges are elements of the parties' orientation to the new kind of mobile talk-in-action. These subtle nuances might seem irrelevant if the analyst failed to address mobile social action as a new kind of sequential context. The separation of analysis of sequences of talk from the sequential organization of action may impoverish the analysis and leave salient aspects of social action intact.

## CONCLUSION

EM and CA can be seen as part of cognitive, linguistic, and praxiological revolutions of the twentieth century. EM

opened people's tacit resources of social action, their common sense, and interactional competence up to research. As mentioned, Garfinkel (1967) introduced the research policy of ethnomethodological studies as follows: "their central recommendation is that the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organized everyday affairs are identical with members' procedures for making those settings 'account-able'" (p. 1). CA enabled a further development leading to a systematic research paradigm for the study of interactional behavior as an emergent property of social actions. Together EM and CA have addressed the purposefulness and intelligibility of social actions and discerned the tacit understandings and assumptions that guide the accomplishment of social actions. In all, they have opened up social actions as situated activities that emerge from their practical management within their realization.

CA can be characterized as a reverse engineering program that identifies the unique "fingerprint" of each social practice both in everyday and institutional contexts. However, this fingerprint is not yet the outcome of the research but its beginning. Studies on interaction explore the patterns of action-in-interaction to show how they contribute to the social practice in question. The distinct patterns of interaction are not only a fingerprint through which the type of interaction can be recognized but, primarily, the actors' way of organizing and arranging the accomplishment of social activities. Ultimately, the analyst investigates the organization of social action through explication of the working of interactional patterns.

On the whole, EM and CA discuss how talk and other activities as ongoing achievements contribute to the emergence of social actions, not merely try to understand talk or the organization of action. They have contributed toward our grasp of diversity in social practices. They identify, specify, and compare salient forms of interactional patterns that constitute or contribute to establishing the social world as perceived. Unexplored regions in the sequential organization of social activities still appear to be rich. Further investigations enrich and invigorate our understanding of human beings in society.



## CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

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Critical sociology is an approach to studying society, informed by historical materialism, which seeks to make problematic existing social relations in order to uncover the underlying structural explanations for those relations. As such, it can be applied to all areas of sociological inquiry and is not the study of any subfields within sociology. In each of these areas, we can identify a critical sociology, one that takes to task the underlying assumption of the corresponding mainstream sociology. Advocates of a critical sociology argue that mainstream sociology is, broadly stated, a catalog of what is expected and an explanation for how individuals act when functioning outside those expectations. For critical sociologists, the key is how the norms are defined and what constitutes actions by individuals who violate norms. Where mainstream sociology would see a plane flying out of formation, critical sociology asks whether or not the formation is flying on course, and who or what determines the shape and course of that formation in the first place.

There are two very important areas of sociological research taken for granted at present, but which can easily be identified as the product of a critical sociological lens. The first is the emergence of class as a research concept, and while still contentious on some level a class-based analysis of society is as important as one rooted in an understanding of social stratification. In the class model of society, individuals find themselves in structural positions, and the consequent ability to improve one's social and economic standing is constrained by the limitations of that structure. Whereas social stratification literature situates each individual along a continuum within society, the class-based literature is more concerned with how structural

barriers impede progress regardless of individual efforts. This has led to the social and political activism directed at those political and social institutions reproducing the inequities within society.

The second major contribution of critical sociology is how we understand economic development and the relationship between advanced industrial nations and the rest of the developing world. Theories of modernization were rooted in an understanding of development based on a premise that all nations must undergo stages of economic and social development much like that experienced by advanced capitalist nations. Scholars focused on the lack of efficient bureaucratic structures, incentive mechanisms, rational markets, and labor mobility as the basis for failed or lagging national development. But critical sociologists posited a set of theories about the relationship between developing nonindustrial nations and the capitalist core, challenged the notion of a teleological path to progress, and pointed out that developing nations were harmed by (and not lagging) the more developed nations. This research gave rise to discussions of imperialism, the nature of democracy and development, and explorations into the means by which advanced nations impose bureaucratic solutions (via agencies like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund) or intervene politically and militarily to ensure regimes and economies favorable to advanced capitalist countries rather than promoting independent economic and social development.

In general, critical sociology can be characterized in two ways. First, those writing in the critical sociology tradition are generally opposed to functional explanations of how society works. The second form of critical sociology

is more parochial, and emerges out of the tradition of radical political economy, a tradition that looks more carefully at why society is designed to generate bad outcomes for many people rather than understanding how bad outcomes occur in society. While early critical sociology was rooted in the traditions characterized as Marxism, critical sociology more generally extends beyond the material concerns of scholars writing in that tradition and embraces questions of power writ large, the importance of culture, and the nature of social relationships that are not rooted in its material conditions (e.g., racism and sexism).

Both strands of critical sociology emerge out of the intellectual agenda of critical theory, although sociologists have expanded the range and scope of inquiry beyond that which is most commonly associated with critical theorists. The remainder of this chapter briefly reviews the origins and current directions of critical sociology. In the next section, I explore the historical roots of the discipline with respect to mainstream sociology. This is followed by a discussion of the emergence of critical theory and its role in defining the nature of critical sociology. In the second section, I identify some research within the critical sociology tradition, the importance of this research, and its impact on the theory and practice of sociology. In the final section, I offer some insight into the areas of inquiry that will serve as the focal point of future critical sociology research.

## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF A CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

To understand critical sociology, it is essential to reflect on sociology as an intellectual discipline writ large. Unlike other subfields within sociology, critical sociology represents an approach to sociological inquiry as opposed to being a branch of that enterprise. This is best understood by looking at the roots of the discipline, and by tracing the intellectual traditions that gave rise to a critical sociology. It is the reaction to these traditions of scholarship and social analysis and the consequences for understanding society that give rise to the methods underlying critical sociological analysis.

### The Development of Sociology as a Science

Most social sciences have roots that trace back as long as there have been universities and colleges organized for the study of the world in which people find themselves. While original scholarship tended to be in the physical realm, scholars and philosophers have long concerned themselves with the place humans hold in the larger universe, the basis and meaning of love and politics, and by the 1700s serious inquiries into how society operates, and the relationship of people and society (for a general review, see Bauman 1976, chap. 1). The publication of Rousseau's "On the Social Contract in 1762" (Barker 1990) anticipated the need of a social and political order with the

authority (as he put it) to impose freedom on individuals. This work formed the foundation of much of the political philosophy of what has come to be known as the Enlightenment and prepared the path for the sociological inquiry into the structure and meaning of society.

Auguste Comte pressed the importance of studying the system of social relations to understand the political and economic behavior of society. In essence, Comte noted that society represents a system of layering by which events can only be analyzed once each of the relationships below the surface is peeled back. Comte stresses the search for empirically based laws of society from which all other actions can be explained (and as positivism developed, through which all actions can be predicted). As Burawoy (1998) puts it, due to the efforts of Comte, "Sociology was the last of the disciplines to enter the kingdom of positivism; from there, armed with superior moral insight, it would rule over the unruly, creating order and progress out of chaos" (p. 12). But perhaps a more important legacy of Comte emerges in his sense that underlying all action is a natural order of things, and all social action is either a confirmation of that natural order moving society forward in its development or a series of actions that result in chaos and failure. As Bauman (1976) points out, Comte's work can be summarized as "a consistent attempt to establish the case for a 'social nature' which makes its way through the fits and starts of political history" (p. 11), and it is the social scientist who can reveal that nature.

In following the tradition of Comte, Durkheim sought to understand the reasons for unequal social outcomes and argues for a moral recentering to counter the disintegrative consequences of the new economic system. Durkheim's development of sociology as a positive science rooted in the collection of hard evidence led him to uncover the failings of an economic system that takes away the connection of individuals to society as a whole (found in preindustrial society) without providing a new moral compass for social action. That compass will necessarily emerge in the natural order of things, but in the interim Durkheim urges the state to enact laws ensuring the welfare of society's citizens. To overstate, the system is not itself the problem.

Max Weber ([1904] 1930) provided an understanding of the requisite forces of reason and order that are essential to the development of civil society. His theories of bureaucracy, rational action, and order help us understand how economic rationality must follow the political rationality reflected in the form of the nation-state. Rules of political action give way to rules of economic action—indeed, the former paves the way for the latter in the forms of commercial law, reliable enforcement of contracts, predictable outcomes of the interaction of individuals in society as they seek economic prosperity. While capitalism represented great wealth and prosperity, economic advances occur only when a society has developed the social and political conditions necessary for the orderly and free exchange of the factors of production.

The sociology that took hold by the end of the nineteenth century was related to the emergence of capitalism. Weber's work on religion, rationalization, and bureaucracy helped shape the discipline. Talcott Parsons's translation of Weber's work ([1904] 1930) added a dimension of functionalism in outcomes—that is, the social reality reflects social needs as observed. Inequality and inequities arising in capitalism have as much if not more to do with individual failing rather than structural impediments to the “rational” order of events or actions. While Weber gave us a model of society that worked toward efficient operation, Parsons helped define this operation as a natural state of events and identified the capitalist system of social relations as the natural evolution of society.

Thus, capitalist society was the “natural” condition, and sociology represented the science for understanding how society operated (and implicitly within the perspective that problems in society were the result of individual failure), which in turn gave rise to a critical and oppositional voice within sociology. Critical sociology emerged to challenge that view (Quinney 1979) and to demonstrate that social inequality was not an aberration but itself the normal outcome of a system predicated on power relationships and competing visions of social organization, though, as Luhmann (1994) reminds us, we must be ever mindful of how theory structures the way we examine the world. Levine (2004) outlines some of the political challenges faced by oppositional voices as they emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, and the intellectual developments leading to a critical sociological agenda. A discussion of the intellectual tradition that underpins this critical analysis follows.

### **Critical Theory and the Emergence of a Critical Sociology**

One of the central pillars of sociological analysis is found in the writings of Karl Marx. Writing at a time when capitalism's transformative power and its ability to generate great wealth was first taking hold, Marx's agenda was to examine how this system worked, how it was different from what came before it, and where a society driven by what he called capitalist social relations was heading. Building on the intellectual traditions of social and political theory, political economy, and within the emergent scientific sociology of Comte, Marx developed a critical theory of society. Earlier forms of utopian socialist writings, scientific political economy, and critical philosophy had as not yet identified either the nature of the class society or the mechanisms that defined capitalism as a social and economic system of human activities. The collected works of Marx brought to the fore issues of alienation, the appropriation through new social relations of the means of production and thereby of the profit of human labor, and the importance of the social and political institutions developing in tandem with the development of capitalism as a globalizing system of production. It was this critical theory that went beyond the notion of a “value-free”

empirical exercise designed—as early sociologists attempted to do—to provide an objective description through data collection and analysis. For Marx and those who followed, the task of critical theory was to situate knowledge within the set of social realities and values of society for the purpose of challenging and negating the status quo.

The motivation of the philosophical impulse we have come to understand as critical theory was, in large part, the result of scholars working in what has collectively been called the Frankfurt School (see, e.g., Bauman 1976) who argued that science and technology had become the new religion of capitalist society (see Rockwell 2004 for the Hegelian roots of Marx's thinking and its role in the development of critical theory). Much as Marx wrote about the reification of commodities, that is, the commodity became divorced from its producer and thereby gained “value” in its own right, so too have knowledge and culture become objects with their own standing rather than part of the society that created them.

The process of reification of culture created a new form of culture that undermined the potential for revolutionary action. Moreover, according to Marx, this process of reification applies to all human experience. As a result, advances of capitalism into the twentieth century closed off the possibility of critical thought as intellectual work became dominated by a “fetishism” of facts. This positivism accorded facts an illusionary objectivity and independence from the social relations in which they were produced (see Ray 1990). The resulting agenda in the period between the two world wars and the development and emergence of European fascism (preceded as it were by the proletarian revolution in Russia, but the defeat of all other revolutionary worker movements in Europe), was one of unpacking the relationship between the development of the capitalist system and the potential for enlightened and emancipatory social change. As Ray (1990) points out, “The project of Critical Theory has been to develop ways of thinking so subversive of dominant legitimations, that to understand them is to resist them” (p. xviii). Critical theory built on Marx's material analysis and made important inroads into the role of culture and science in the reproduction of these reactionary ideologies (Scott 1978).

### **Toward a Critical Sociological Methodology**

With its intellectual debt to critical theory, critical sociology emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a challenge to mainstream sociology and as a means to assess the role that capitalism played in determining the structures, relationships, and systems within the American society. For these scholars, many were graduate students at that time, the discipline of sociology was a “bourgeois” science serving as an apology for the status quo rather than a force for analysis of what was wrong with Western society. That is, critical sociologists argued that mainstream sociology was

a discipline driven by the need to identify and rationalize the existing social relations as empirically observed working of some natural order in the evolution of society. The fetish of knowledge and the cult of data obscured the way that society was in fact a construction of a particular historic economic system.

Critical sociology is first and foremost informed by a historical materialist approach to understanding society. Specifically, this is the application of Marx's analysis of the capitalist system to the examination of historical development. While the political economists who preceded Marx focused on understanding the historical roots of contemporary society as the key to unlocking how society functioned in its present day, Marx argued that to treat social history prior to its present moment as external facts is to miss the fundamental relationship between the past and the present. It is precisely how history is implicated in the contemporary material relationships of the present that will unlock our understanding the social processes in force at the present. To assign events prior to any era as some prehistory is to mistake the relationship of those events to current behavior and sows the seeds of missing the critical dimensions of contemporary social relations. As he writes about Adam Smith, "What Adam Smith, in the true eighteenth-century manner, puts in the prehistoric period, the period preceding history, is rather a product of history" (Marx 1973:156). Simply put, Marx argues that in Smith's search for the essence of the "modern" economy he sets aside the social relationships that gave rise to that modern economy.

Smith focuses on explaining the particular operation of capitalism, production, and the creation of wealth, but for Marx that analysis is doomed by Smith's failure to understand the ties to precapitalist production. Differentiating use value from exchange value, Marx argues that both always existed so long as humanity exerted itself with regard to nature (i.e., trying to change nature through production) but the particular aspect of contemporary (i.e., capitalist) social relations is precisely the history of how exchange values become appropriated by some, and through that appropriation some members of society exert control and power over others in society. Marx (1973) goes on to explain the connection between history and material reality:

Relations of personal dependence (entirely spontaneous at the outset) are the first social forms, in which human productive capacity develops only to a slight extent and at isolated points. Personal independence founded on *objective* [*sachlicher*] dependence is the second great form, in which a system of general social metabolism, of universal relations, of all-round needs and universal capacities is formed for the first time. Free individuality, based on the universal development of individual and on their subordination of their communal, social productivity as their social wealth, is the third stage. The second stage creates the conditions for the third. Patriarchal as well as ancient conditions (feudal also) thus disintegrate with the development of commerce, of luxury, of

*money, of exchange value*, while modern society arises and grows in the same measure. (P. 158)

Out of this development, according to Marx, all other social, political, and ideological institutions and perspectives emerge, each subject to the requirement of the material conditions dominant in any era and each subject to transformation as those material conditions change. It is a mistake, as many have done, to reduce Marx to an economic determinist analysis of society even as Marx focuses on the material relationships extant within society. Rather, critical sociologists, following Marx and critical theorists, argue that one cannot understand the complex relationship between what Marx calls the base and superstructure—the material reality of how society organizes production and the complex set of social, political, and ideological institutions that govern and maintain that social organization of production—unless one also understands the historically specific forces that drive the emergence of contemporary society.

Unlike mainstream sociology, which takes society as given, tries to catalog its various activities and relationships (albeit an important task in its own right), and measures progress toward some naturally determined ideal, critical sociologists take society's existing relationships as both the product of its past and the source of its future—and it is only through proper understanding of how society came to be will we be able to address how to influence change toward a more progressive and positive vision for the future. To paraphrase Marx, mainstream sociologists have only to interpret the world; the point for critical sociologists is to change it. It is through the historical materialism of critical sociology that an understanding of how society operates is possible, leading to a program for change.

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

Initially, critical sociologists asked questions relating to the outcomes that we experience, and the historical conditions that drive contemporary social outcomes. Furthermore, there was interest in creating a theoretical frame that would lead to identifying the means for establishing some ideal state of being. The social unrest of the 1960s and the increasing intellectual dissatisfaction with the extant sociological explanations caused many sociologists to look toward critical theory to inform their analyses. With a focus on the nature of the capitalist system and a debt to the writings of Marx (see especially Marx 1964, 1967, 1972), critical sociologists and radical economists embarked on a detailed exploration of the role that the capitalist system played in defining and determining the nature of production and work (Thompson 1964; Braverman 1974; Burawoy 1979; Edwards 1979), the nature of class structure (Zeitlin 1970; Wright 1979), the

nature of the state (Poulantzas 1978; Wright 1978; Block 1987; Esping-Anderson 1990), the emergence and role of ideology (Gouldner 1970, 1973; Ollman 1971; Marcuse [1941] 1977), the nature of education and the reproduction of social relations (Bowles and Gintis 1976; Apple 1979; Willis 1981), the creation of urban space (Edel 1973; Harvey 1973, 1982), the nature of public sector fiscal policy (O'Connor 1973), the nature of organizations (Clegg 1975; Clegg and Dunkerley 1977; Bradley and Wilkie 1980), the nature of international capital and world-systems (Baran and Sweezy 1968; Wallerstein 1974, 1976; Chase-Dunn 1989), the nature of Third World development (Frank 1966), the role and structure of the ruling class (Therborn 1976, 1978; Domhoff 1978), and the nature of culture and religion (Tawney [1926] 1958; Eagleton 1976; Berger [1972] 1977).

Later, scholars who asked how race, gender, and other forms of inequality persisted even under supposedly liberating and often Marxist analyses posed challenges to critical theorists and many critical sociologists. In the introduction to her book, Lydia Sargent (1981) exposit many of the contradictions and theoretical considerations that confronted women engaged in progressive politics throughout the 1960s and 1970s. One of the more important assaults on the limitations of a purely materialist, Marxist, analysis of society comes from Heidi Hartmann's (1981) well-titled essay on the unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism. In this essay, and the debates that followed (see Sargent 1981; Sargent 1981 for early compendiums on this work and reactions to Hartmann's premises), Hartmann questions whether we can safely assume that all forms of power inequality (coming, as it does, at the height of the Women's Movement) can be addressed through an analysis of a society rooted in traditional Marxian concerns of class struggle and the appropriation of the means of production. Simply put, Hartmann asks, why should we assume that by simply addressing the social consequences of a particular economic organization of social relations we will remove the gender-based inequality in contemporary society? Unwilling to give up her Marxian roots, Hartmann nonetheless acknowledges that there are legitimate questions raised by feminist scholars.

Nancy Fraser (1985) more pointedly takes critical theory to task, and by extension critical sociology, when she identifies the failure of critical theory to consider gender inequality in its exploration of oppression and inequities within capitalist society. She argues,

A critical social theory frames its research program and its conceptual framework with an eye to the aims and activities of those oppositional social movements with which it has a partisan though not uncritical identification. The questions it asks and the models it designs are informed by that identification and interest. (P. 97)

Why, she then asks, does critical theory (represented in the writing of Habermas) fail to examine or even

acknowledge the domination of females by males? Following what might broadly be called a critical sociology, Fraser explores the problem of capitalist exploitation and offers us the distinction between public and private spheres as a way of grasping the nature of gender inequality. Gender-based workplace inequality persists and takes on new forms (see Roberts 2004 and the other essays in Gottfried and Reese 2004). In a similar vein, scholars brought questions of race as well as gender to bear (Hill-Collins 1990) as they took radical and mainstream scholarship to task for its primary focus on material conditions, class structure, and capitalism as an economic system.

The importance of a class versus status approach to the problems of the day can be seen in the ongoing discussion of the importance and impact of race in our society. In this important work on the consequence of racial inequality, Wilson (1978) articulates an argument that African Americans suffer because they are trapped in the lowest strata of our society. A history of past oppression and unequal treatment due to the scourge of racism and slavery may explain the underlying basis for their status, but it is not an explanation for the continued poverty they face. Wilson looks instead to a failure of African Americans to secure the necessary attributes that accounts for their lower status. The legacy of racism is economic distress and persistent poverty, but the solution cannot lie simply with legislation outlawing racism. For Wilson, there is a declining significance of race, and it is the creation of an emergent middle class (more accurately, a middle-income strata) that will alleviate the plight of African Americans.

In response, Marable (1983) offers a class-based analysis of the African American experience, and much as Gunder Frank did with developing countries Marable posits a competing theory of failed economic growth and persistent poverty as the result of capitalist social development. It is the lack of control over the means of production and their class position that relegates African Americans to the bottom layers of society. Race helps explain why African Americans fill the ranks of society's poor, but it is the fundamental relationships within capitalism that keep working people poor. No significant change will occur as the result of the creation of an African American middle class in much the same way that the emergence of a middle class writ large cannot alleviate the struggles of working people everywhere.

The debate continues, and much the same way that Hartmann raised concerns about whether a purely Marxist analysis can get to the roots of gender-based social inequality, critics look at the problem of race in the U.S. society. A recent example is Leonardo's (2004) inquiry about whether there may well be an unhappy marriage of Marxism and race theory, in this case as it pertains to our understanding of why educational policy seems to regularly fail inner-city minority children. Leonardo posits that discussions looking mainly at the way education reproduce class positions (Davies 1995) fail to take into account the decidedly racial pattern of low performance, but race-based

explanations are not enough when one considers rural poverty and low educational attainment in the society as a whole.

Although Marxist analysis remains important, critical sociology has moved well past its roots as primarily a critique of the social order in the exploration of extant power relationships existing within a society organized under the principles of capitalist social relations. The state of contemporary critical sociology is strong; the topics explored are increasing broad as scholars revisit old themes of colonialism and the origins of European capitalism (von der Heydt-Coca 2005), education under a changing capitalist system (Monahan 2005), the role of sociology as a politically engaged discipline (Burawoy 2005), and religion—whether looking to its roots (Goldstein 2005) or its current challenges (Langman 2005).

Critical sociologists continue to engage our understanding of race, how it is conceptualized and how it must be analyzed apart from concepts found in classical Marxism (see Coates 2004). In particular, they raise questions about the role race plays in social policy in the era of globalization and neoliberalism (Brewer 2004) and the continuing role race plays in both repression and resistance within advanced capitalist societies (Arena 2004). Critical sociologists turn their gaze on the emergence of a so-called new international order or perhaps another “new international order” looking at the nature of oppression and resistance (Podobnik and Reifer 2005). Gianpaolo (2005) examines how workers outside of this country react to the conditions formulated by our economic and social policies and the way these are projected in the rest of the world. In addition, critical sociologists wonder how these new systems project the opportunity for new form of social resistance and new kinds of student movements (Ross 2005).

Still rooted in a concern over oppression and inequality driven by Marx’s analysis of capitalism, critical sociology has embraced postmodernism, feminism, and cultural criticism to name but a few approaches to understand the way in which the existing social relations shape power and define its consequences. As the recent collection of essays in Pfohl et al. (2006) demonstrates, there are significant links between the history of a society, the culture that emerges, and the power relationships that result, all of which go beyond situating these processes within capitalism. But at the same time, as Shor (2006) argues, these social outcomes cannot be separated from the underlying material conditions in existence. Reactions to these conditions generate social movements that resist the power inequities in both the economic and the cultural realm (Gamson 2006).

Critical sociology is more than a subdiscipline; it is an approach to how one understands and investigates social processes and phenomena. It helps generate the subjects of inquiry as well as formulate the underlying assumptions of that analysis. For example, Gurr (1970) gave us an explanation for social unrest that was rooted in the notion of individual failure, a society where individuals who cannot

succeed resort to the mob mentality and strike out in their frustration. Its underlying assumption about society borrows from a Durkheimian sensibility that each of us has a place and only our lack of adjustment will drive us to do irrational and unreasonable acts. By contrast, Tilly (1978) offers a more structural understanding of the nature of power and the resources that accrue as a result, and looks to the organization of and organizations within society as the reasons for social unrest and resistance. Borrowing from both a Weberian view of the rational mobilization of resources to explain organizational capacities and constraints and a Marxian understanding of class structure and role of political power, Tilly offers what might be called a critical sociological explanation of the same phenomenon. More recently, Buttel and Gould (2005) use the critical sociological lens to examine the growing international social movements that arise in response to corporatism and the threat to the environment globally.

Critical sociology exists to counter those who serve as apologists for the existing social order. That is, perhaps, overstating the underlying intellectual motivation of mainstream sociology. However, as long as there are social outcomes dividing rich and poor, the powerful from the powerless, and oppressors from the oppressed, there will be a critical sociology. And as long as sociological analysis seeks to understand these differences through measurement and description rather than change the difference as part of the enterprise of sociological investigation and analysis, uncover the mechanisms that perpetuate these differences, and expose the social order that give license to some segment of society to benefit at the expense of the rest of society, there will always be a critical sociology.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR A CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY**

The twenty-first century poses several significant challenges for sociology in general, challenges that will more readily be addressed from a critical sociological perspective that is uniquely suited for looking into the future (Cooke 2004). These changes are rooted precisely in the transformations of capitalism within each country and overall as the international system of production develops into a global economy. These include questions of citizenship, identity politics, and the transformation of social policies to address these challenges; the increasing dismantling of the social welfare function of industrialized nations; the emergence of increasing risk in everyday life as the meaning of work changes; the continued legacy of postcolonialism as new forms of nationalism emerge in response to intensified globalization; and the transformation of the economy from a predominantly industrial system of production to one commonly and in turn called a service economy, an information economy, and now a knowledge-based economy. Let us consider each one for a moment.

## Citizenship and Identity Politics

As the recent rioting in France, reminiscent of the racial rioting in the United States during the late 1960s, points out, industrial nations in both Europe and North America are increasingly becoming multiethnic and diverse (see Fasenfest, Booza, and Metzger 2005 for a discussion of ethnic and racial transformation of U.S. cities) due to internal migration and immigration from the periphery. While this has provided labor in many sectors for many decades, not only in Europe but also among low-wage work in the United States, there is an increasing need to find ways to redefine citizenship and belonging. The French rioting was as much about cultural difference as it was about social exclusion, and in Germany there is the irony that greater liberal freedom has resulted in more traditional religious communities to impose restrictions not possible in their home countries (e.g., among the Turkish community). Critical sociology will bring an understanding of both social and economic processes rooted in the historical development of these migrations, situated in the cultural resistance of the host countries struggling to maintain old definitions in a new cultural environment.

## Dismantling Social Welfare

We are not strangers to fiscal crisis or fluctuating economies and downturns that put pressure on our social resources. But as the economy changes in fundamental ways, traditional social welfare functions are increasingly eroded in a permanent manner. For some countries, like the United States, these functions were weak at best; for other countries (e.g., Europe and Japan), they were part of the social fabric (whether more formal as in Europe or informal as in Japan). As the work of Gottfried and O'Reilly (2004) points to, not only does the social welfare net fray but also there are clearly gender (and race) dimensions of these changes. Critical sociology will permit an exploration of the underlying historical basis for these welfare functions as a way to understand the particular pattern of their dissolution.

## Emergence of a Risk Society

The important work of Ulrich Beck (1992) has pointed out that even as economic growth of the economy overall reaches record levels (true throughout the 1990s), individuals were increasingly uncertain and uncomfortable with their status in society. Firms gradually moved away from models of employee loyalty leading to lifetime employment and toward a pattern of fluid labor forces laid off and hired back as the market and product cycles demanded. As the national economy was increasingly enmeshed in a global economy, workers are pressed to be more flexible in order for the firm to be more competitive. Young people especially look for new models for their work lives, coming under increasing pressure as a result of the absence of a path for their future (Powell and Edwards 2003). For

most workers that means less pay, loss of benefits, and greater insecurity. Critical sociology will provide a window into how to understand these changes and how to mobilize for greater security and economic stability.

## Postcolonial Resistance and Globalization

The much publicized (and growing international) resistance to events like the meetings of the World Trade Organization and the World Bank highlights the nature of resistance not just on the national level but as the product of international coalitions seeking to alter the pattern of decline and immiseration that follows. Critical sociologists (see, e.g., the collection of essays in Podobnik and Reifer 2005) are increasingly looking at how resistance has been transformed and projecting what new arenas of opposition will emerge in response to this social and economic transformation. While even mainstream sociology acknowledges that there are new challenges, most of the time this is seen as the cost of the global transformation of the economy. Critical sociology argues that the form and extent of that transformation is a function of particular social forces rooted in capitalism, and that alternative visions are possible.

## Post-Fordist Economic Transformation

The transition of our economy has been a long and somewhat drawn out process. The first stages of this transformation are the well-researched periods of rust-belt deindustrialization as industry either moved away from or simply closed older operations in traditional industrial cities. Not just the decline of older cities like Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Youngstown in the United States but also the shuttering of mills in the United Kingdom and the decline of the Ruhr Gebiet in the western regions of Germany demonstrate that this was a global process of change. Some places remade themselves by focusing on services and high technology, some by becoming centers of financial operations. But this last decade has witnessed two fundamental changes: many of these so-called high-tech and service work is leaving the industrial nations for the developing world, and many of the traditional industries are becoming transformed permanently. In the first instance, we have heard much about India, Malaysia, and the Philippines, and in the second, even though automobile production remains robust in the number of automobiles produced and sold, the global work force employed in making cars has dropped dramatically as a result of automation, new production techniques, and new materials. Critical sociologists are just beginning to explore what is meant by good jobs, how these changes will alter our understanding of work, and perhaps how this transformation may well alter the very social fabric we have woven for the past 100 years.

The future is unclear. Critical sociology, so long as the future is driven by a capitalist social, political, and economic logic, may well be the best way of exploring the present to understand the future.

# HUMANIST SOCIOLOGY

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Numerous theoretical frameworks, among them Marxism, conflict theory, phenomenology, symbolic interaction, feminist sociology, and postmodern sociology, can all be said to have some form of a humanistic orientation as a part of their overall framework. However, as a specific school, humanist sociology is most readily identified with those sociologists who in their teaching, research, and activism gravitate around the Association for Humanist Sociology (AHS)—founded in 1976 by Alfred McClung Lee, Elizabeth Briant Lee, and Charles Flynn. Although a number of sociologists (Glass 1971; Goodwin 1983; Lee 1973; Scimecca 1995) have offered definitions of humanist sociology, the one I will use here is that of a former president of the AHS, Thomas Ford Hoult (1979), who calls sociology humanist if “the research and teachings of its practitioners have one ultimate purpose—to develop a society where the best potential of *all* humans is to be realized; in short to develop a *humane* society” (p. 88).

Because of this desire on the part of humanist sociologists to “develop a humane society,” they often find themselves outside, and in conflict with, mainstream sociology, with its emphasis on objectivity and value neutrality. This, however, was not always the case. As I will argue in this chapter, a humanistic orientation was at the very heart of the development of sociology in the United States. It is an orientation that was discarded in the 1930s, and it is this lost legacy that is now to be found in humanist sociology. In short, to be a contemporary humanist sociologist means that one regards sociology, first and foremost, as a moral endeavor, an ethical venture that emphasizes freedom of choice on the part of the individual, sees social justice as a basic right of the individual, and calls for intervention

whenever freedom and justice are restricted (Scimecca 1987). Knowledge, for the humanist sociologist, is to be used for the betterment of humankind—to help usher in “a humane society.”

## THE BASIC PREMISES OF HUMANIST SOCIOLOGY

There is a general consensus among humanist sociologists that along with the emphasis on freedom and justice, sociology should not (as conventional sociology has done) embrace *objectivism* (defined here as the position that facts exist independent of the observer and that the observer should be a value-neutral compiler of these facts). To this end, all articles in the official publication of the AHS, *Humanity and Society*, begin with a reflexive statement in which the author or authors state their values. The rationale behind this position is that objectivism not only excludes introducing moral precepts into research but also that “dispassionate observation” is based on a faulty epistemology. Humanist sociology, thus, seeks to answer the important questions concerning *freedom* (What is the role of autonomy and choice in a given society?); *moral values* (What is the best way of ensuring the fullest development of human potential?); and *epistemology* (How does the mind know reality?)—questions that are often overlooked by mainstream sociology. It is these assumptions and questions that define contemporary humanist sociology and are part of a larger tradition of humanism that can be traced back to the Middle Ages, through the Enlightenment, and in the origins of American sociology.



## THE ORIGINS OF HUMANISM

*Humanism* in its broadest usage began as the philosophical movement that originated in Italy in the second half of the fourteenth century, a movement that focused on and affirmed the dignity of the human being. Although, over the centuries, there have been numerous varieties of humanism, both religious and nonreligious, all who call themselves humanists have been in basic agreement that every human being has dignity and worth and therefore should be the measure of all things. While twelfth and thirteenth century intellectual life was dominated by the philosophical school of scholasticism (a philosophical system taught by the “schoolmen” of medieval universities, who tried to reconcile the philosophy of the ancient classical philosophers with Christian theology), by the fourteenth century, scholasticism came to be seen by intellectuals outside the Church and the universities as essentially irrelevant to daily life. The example most often used to point to the irrelevance of scholasticism, along with the growth of medieval cities and greater contact with the East and its different views and customs, led thinkers such as Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374) and Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) to propose a philosophical framework different from that of the scholastics—philosophical humanism (Martindale 1981).

Whereas the scholastics subordinated faith to reason whenever there was even the possibility of disagreement between the two, the humanists (who considered themselves Christians) saw no such contradiction between faith and reason. If God had given human beings free will and the ability to reason, then this reason would lead humankind to the truth of Christianity. God still ruled the world, and even though the humanists saw the world as in need of change, this change could be brought about by and through the use of God-given human reason. In short, for the medieval humanists, free will and reason could be used to usher in a more humane world than was the case in the Europe of the time.

Because there was no such thing as social science in the Middle Ages, humanism was simply a philosophical system, albeit a controversial one. The foundation of a sociological humanism would come out of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment thought and can be directly traced to two traditions—moral philosophy and empiricism—traditions that, although modern sociologists now see them as separate, were to the Enlightenment French and Scottish philosophers (collectively known as the *philosophes*) intertwined and interdependent. The *philosophes* called for a fusion of morals and science, for a social science that sought to liberate human beings and ensure the fullest development of the person.

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE LEGACY OF SOCIOLOGICAL HUMANISM

Modern sociology begins with the Enlightenment *philosophes*' call for the application of scientific principles to the study of human behavior (Rossides 1998). However, what must not be overlooked is that the *philosophes* were first and foremost moral philosophers. Science and morality were to be fused, not separated; the “is” and the “ought” were to be merged into a moral science, a science to be used for the betterment of humankind. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), with his arguments against inequality and in favor of the dignity of the person, best represents this early moral science tradition. Rousseau ([1755] 1985) started with the basic assumption that all people are created equal and from this premise formulated a radical system of politics. For Rousseau and the *philosophes*, individual liberty and freedom prospered only under conditions of minimal external constraint that had to be based on the consensus of the people (Goodwin and Scimecca 2006). The most important value was the freedom of the individual in a humane society, a society that, in turn, ensured this freedom. Not having any developed psychology of the individual or of the subjective side of human behavior or even knowledge of how institutions are formed, and lacking a scientific methodology, the *philosophes* were not able to advance beyond this very modest beginning.

This tradition of a “moral science” has, for the most part, been overlooked by contemporary sociologists, who instead focus on the undeveloped empiricism of the *philosophes*, which, although it without doubt played a preeminent role in the rise of social science, is still only, at best, half of what the *philosophes* advocated. By their dismissal of the moral science tradition and by their almost unquestioning embrace of the positivism that Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, and the other early founders of sociology as a discipline advocated,<sup>1</sup> contemporary sociologists have also overlooked the concern of the *philosophes* that there was an epistemological dilemma inherent in the new empirical science they envisioned. If a social science was to arise out of the Enlightenment, it needed a new conception of knowledge—one that rejected Greek and medieval-Christian epistemology. The Aristotelian view held that a definite entity resided within the human body, an entity that passively observed what was going on in the world, just as the spectator does. The observer sees a picture of the world, and it is this passive observation that constitutes experience. Science, in the Aristotelian model, was the process of observing objects as they were thought to be conceived in the human mind. Following Newton, the world was to be understood in terms of mathematical equations with axioms in the minds of humans that were put there by God and that enabled the mind to picture reality (Scimecca 1989). John Locke's ([1690] 1894) *Essay*

*Concerning Human Understanding* represented an early attempt to show that the extreme rationalist notion (that the world precisely followed mathematical axioms) was in error. Locke argued that first principles did not exist a priori but instead came from the facts of experience. Locke, however, became caught up in the epistemological dilemma that experience was mental and not physical and therefore still had to be located in the “unscientific” concept of mind. This led Locke, like David Hume (1711–1776) after him, to conclude that an exact science of human behavior was unattainable (Randall 1976). Only probabilistic knowledge could be arrived at, and this could only modestly be used to guide humankind.

Although the epistemological dilemma posed by Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers was real to them, the development of sociology in France, England, and later in the United States discarded these concerns and embraced positivism as the cornerstone of the discipline. Most of early American sociology, however, developed differently, and it is through the influence of pragmatism and the desire by a number of early American sociologists to use sociology to spread the social gospel and in the process reject social Darwinism that the tradition of humanism in sociology was kept alive in the United States around the turn of the twentieth century.

## PRAGMATISM AND HUMANISM

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The importance of pragmatism for humanist sociology lies in its active epistemology, which, in turn, undergirds an active theory of the mind, thereby challenging the positivistic behaviorism of the time. For the pragmatists, how the mind comes to know cannot be separated from how the mind actually develops.

George Herbert Mead ([1934] 1974) exemplifies the pragmatists' view regarding the development of mind. Consciousness and will arise from problems. Individuals ascertain the intentions of others and then respond on the basis of their interpretations. If there were no interactions with others, there would be no development of the mind. Individuals possess the ability to modify their own behavior: They are subjects who construct their acts rather than ones who simply respond in predetermined ways. Human beings are capable of reflexive behavior—that is, they can turn back and think about their experiences. The individual is not a passive agent who merely reacts to external constraints but someone who actively chooses among alternative courses of action. Individuals interpret data available to them in social situations. Choices of potential solutions are only limited by the given facts of the individual's presence in the larger network of society. This ability to choose among alternatives makes individuals both determined and determiners (Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds 1977).

Mead and the pragmatists held that the determination of ideas, in particular how social structure affected the mind of an individual, was a social-psychological process.

Thinking followed the pattern of language. Language is the mechanism through which humans develop a self and mind, and language is social because words assume meaning only when they are interpreted by social behavior. Social patterns, thus, establish meanings. Language sets the basis for reason, logic, and by extension all scientific and moral endeavors. An individual is logical when he or she is in agreement with his or her universe of discourse; he or she is moral when he or she is in agreement with his or her community. Language is a mediator of social behavior in that values and norms come from language. Value judgments and collective patterns exist behind words; meaning is socially bestowed.

Although Mead was the most important pragmatist for understanding the development of self, the epistemology of pragmatism was most precisely formulated by John Dewey (1931, 1929). Dewey's epistemology represented a final break with the notion that the mind comes to know because it is a spectator to reality. For Dewey, thought was spatiotemporal. Eternal truths, universals, all a priori systems are suspect. Experience depends on one's environment—an environment that is physical, biological, and cultural. Ideas are not Platonic essences, and they do not exist independent of the observer; instead they depend on the experience of the individual (Dewey 1931). Dewey's position is, thus, anti-positivistic in that the mind deals only with ideas and, therefore, does not experience reality, but only ideas about reality. Truth is not absolute but is simply what is consistent with experience.

The individual is engaged in an active confrontation with the world; mind and self develop in a social process. The pragmatists provided an epistemological justification for freedom (a basic tenet of humanism). The mind develops in a social context and comes to know as it comes into being. Any restriction on the freedom of the mind to inquire and know implies a restriction on the mind to fully develop. Epistemology and freedom are inseparable. Pragmatism, by joining epistemology and freedom via the social development of mind, also provides a solution for the seeming incompatibility between an instrumental and an intrinsic approach to values. The value of freedom is instrumental in that it is created in action (the action of the developing mind); but it is also intrinsic in that the mind cannot fully develop without the creation of an environment that ensures freedom (Scimecca 1989). This integrated epistemological framework provides the basis for a humanistic methodology for sociology.

## PRAGMATISM, METHODOLOGY, AND HUMANISM

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Dewey and Mead formulated a methodology that offered social scientists a frame of reference different from that of the “traditional scientific methodology.” Flexibility is the main characteristic of this pragmatic methodology—it does not offer specific rules of inquiry to which social

problems have to be adapted. Instead, the methodology grows out of the problem itself. The social scientist fashions his or her methodology depending on the problem being considered. New methodologies start from the problems and obstacles that arise in the research process. The end result is that the research techniques developed enable the researcher to be both a participant and observer of social structures. There is an instrumentalist linkage between theory and practice as it is incorporated into the humanist sociologist's life. This is what humanist sociologist, Alfred McClung Lee (1978) meant when he wrote "Sociologists cannot be persons apart from the human condition they presumably seek to understand" (p. 35).

The dilemma of which values to choose from is answered by pragmatism's emphasis on responsibility as a moral standard—an ethical imperative that assumes that a fundamental quality of human beings is their potentiality for autonomy. People not only *are* but *ought* to be in charge of their own destiny within the limits permitted by their environment. Individual character development takes place to the extent that persons can and do decide on alternative courses of action (Dewey 1939).

Pragmatism is grounded in freedom of choice. However, as sociology teaches, choice is always limited among alternatives. It is in pointing out these limitations in the form of power relations and vested interests undergirding social structures that humanist sociology moves beyond pragmatism and confronts one of the basic criticisms of pragmatism raised by sociologists—that pragmatism lacks a viable notion of social structure. Humanist sociology seeks to fashion a full-blown vision of the free individual within a society based on the principle of human freedom (Scimecca 1995). It is this epistemology of pragmatism as adapted to spread the social gospel and reject social Darwinism that is of key importance in understanding the origins of American sociology.

## THE SOCIAL GOSPEL AND SOCIAL DARWINISM IN THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

The origins of sociology in the United States are similar to the origins of sociology in Europe in that both came out of the same two traditions—"empiricism" and "moral philosophy." However, more so than European sociology, American sociology today, with a few exceptions, the most noted being humanist sociology, has lost all emphasis on moral philosophy. Although there are a number of reasons for this abandoning of what has been called the "promise of sociology" (Goodwin and Scimecca 2006), I will argue that it was the role of positivistic and objective science in legitimizing sociology in the academy which carried with it the consequence of rendering sociology impotent as a critic of society that, in turn, provides the best explanation of why American sociology lost its moral compass. However, before doing this we need to look at the role the

social gospel and the rejection of social Darwinism played in the shaping of early American sociology.

## The Social Gospel and Early American Sociology

A large number of the leading early American sociologists were practicing Christians who viewed sociology as an instrument for spreading the social gospel, with its emphasis on equality and social justice. Furthermore, even those who were not overtly religious, along with their Christian counterparts, saw industrialization and capitalism as responsible for most of the evils (materialism, inequality, and injustice) extant in American society in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century and viewed social Darwinism as an insidious ideology that reinforced these evils. With, perhaps, only one notable exception—William Graham Sumner (1940, 1911)<sup>2</sup>—the leading early American sociologists were quite adamant in their views that sociology should be a moral sociology, one that would alleviate inequality and injustice. Although there are any number of early American sociologists who were influenced by the social gospel, Albion Small, Jane Addams, and Franklin Giddings stand out among them in their insistence on a moral sociology.

### Albion Woodbury Small (1854–1929)

Albion Small left the presidency of Colby College in 1892 to establish the sociology department at the new University of Chicago and fashioned what would become the first school of sociology in the United States.

Upon his arrival at Chicago, Small's aim was to distinguish sociology there from that of Sumner's, which eschewed any attempt at social reform. Small who identified with the social gospel movement which sought to democratize the political, economic, and social spheres, originally hired scholars of the same background as his (men who were trained in the ministry), who wanted to establish sociology as a mechanism through which they could spread the social gospel. Every member of Small's faculty during its first fifteen years . . . was associated with ministerial work, settlement houses . . . and Social Gospel. (Vidich and Lyman 1985:179)

Christianity drove Small's vision of sociology. For him, sociology was first and foremost a moral discipline, one that would ameliorate the adverse conditions under which people lived. The implementation of the social gospel, or what has been referred to as "American Christian socialism" (Vidich and Lyman 1985:181), was to be accomplished through the use of science. "Sociology might be said to be the science of human interests and their workings under all conditions, just as chemistry is sometimes defined as the 'science of atoms and their behavior under all conditions'" (Small [1905] 1974:184). This science of human interests was to be used to implement the social

gospel that sought the reconstruction of the social order based on social and economic democracy (Small 1920). Jesus had come as a servant and sociology was to be used in the service of people. Social gospelers, seeking to spread Jesus's mission to society's poor and outcasts, would advocate legislation to include limitations on hiring children and better working conditions for pregnant women and mothers, a living wage to support families of all workers, compensatory insurance against sickness and old age, profit sharing, and progressive income taxes—in short, the redistribution of economic power (Beckley 1992). Although many of these items were later incorporated into the New Deal, at the time they were considered highly radical and condemned as a prelude to socialism.

For Small, laissez-faire capitalism was the cause of the major problems of American society, and he wanted to forge a moral scientific sociology that would solve these problems. Secular Marxism, in Small's view, had failed badly and so had the organized religion of the time, which he saw as supporting the existing power arrangements. Only by combining Christianity and socialism would sociology become the moral and ethical science necessary to usher in a humane society. "The only way out of this mess must be the acceptance of the domain of a beneficent Father, and adoption of the belief that the only economy which can fit this world permanently is the economy of brotherhood" (Small 1920:683).

Thus, Small's sociology (Small and Vincent 1894) was one of the first attempts to formalize the position of the social critic through the use of "informed scientific criticism of the very society in which the social scientists themselves live and work" (Becker 1971:21). And it is in Small's vision of sociology that he tried to establish at the University of Chicago that we see the tensions involved in developing a new field worthy of inclusion in the university. According to Becker (1971), Small was torn between "two poles: the human urgency of the social problem on one end and the quiet respectability of objective science on the other" (p. 6). Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on one's orientation to the field of sociology, it was the latter version of the two poles that eventually conquered sociology. Small's Christian version of sociology as a means for implementing the social gospel could not in the end withstand the charges of a lack of respectability as defined by the other social sciences, in particular economics, which was objective, quantified, and posed no threat to the laissez-faire ideology championed by the social Darwinists and the business elites of the time.

### Jane Addams (1860–1935)

Jane Addams is usually not considered to be a sociologist but rather is remembered as a founder of the profession of social work and as a political activist. However, this overlooks her substantial contribution to a value-oriented sociology, one that took as its starting point the moral imperative of helping people to achieve their full humanity (Scimecca and Goodwin 2003).

Although Addams was not a practicing Christian in the traditional sense of the word,<sup>3</sup> she was still caught up in the social gospel movement of the early twentieth century. Through its focus on equality and social justice, the social gospel movement was an important component of the intellectual context of Hull-House and played an important role in drawing Christian women to its outreach programs. As Dorrien (1995) says, "Jane Addams bought into the social gospels' essential tenets" (p. 45). Or as Elshtain (2002) writes,

Educated young women should be the agents of [the] resurgence of Christian humanitarianism. Like the social gospel advocates, Addams believed that the concentration of power in the hands of a few people in the economic realm in America represented a dire threat to democracy. (P. 96)

Along with her intellectual acceptance of equality and social justice, Addams was very much connected to the leading members of the sociology department at the University of Chicago, in particular to Albion Small. She was imbued with the same spirit of social gospel reform as were the Christian sociologists at the University of Chicago, this despite the criticisms by some clergy that Addams and the women of Hull-House were not overtly religious enough.

Addams embraced the secular aspects of the social gospel—its progressive politics and its emphasis on social justice. Where she differed with the social gospelers was in how to bring this all about. But this didn't matter in practice because her ends and the ends of the social gospelers were the same.

Jane Addams was an activist sociologist, and instead of accepting a value-free scientific approach to understanding human behavior, she sought to ameliorate the ills of society. She began from the moral imperative of helping people achieve their full humanity. Her sociology was value laden and progressive, while still being rigorous. What is often overlooked is that Addams and the women of Hull-House used systematically collected statistical data to reinforce their policy recommendations. In particular, *Hull-House Maps and Papers* (1895), of which she was a coeditor, served as the basis of the ecological approach later adopted by the Chicago School of Sociology. "The mapping of social and demographic characteristics of a population in a geographic area was the core methodology of Chicago sociologists of the 1920s, their only 'recognized' quantitative technique" (Deegan 1991:48).

For Addams, sociology should first and foremost help people lead better lives, and her own life was a testimony to this principle. Calling Addams's sociology "critical pragmatism," Deegan (1988) describes what could easily be a manifesto for humanist sociology today:

Addams' theory of critical pragmatism was based on democracy to ensure social equality, and education as the mechanism to protect that right. She drew freely on the

central concepts of symbolic interactionism, especially as they were articulated by Mead, Dewey, and Thomas. Social interaction based on equal participation for all, however, was stunted and blocked in American cities. As a result of capitalism, immigration, and changes in the home affecting primarily women, children, and the aged, communication and interactions were failing to work for the whole community. To resolve these problems, democracy and education needed to be used as tools to improve social institutions, community control and the vitality everyday life. In this way, Addams connected with the social psychology of symbolic interactionism and with the structural problems of city life. (P. 273)

In short, Jane Addams's sociology was moral to the core, and because she was a radical and a woman (in a male-dominated world), her contributions to sociology have been overlooked.

### Franklin Giddings (1851–1931)

Like Small, Giddings was a minister's son, and his Christianity was an integral part of his sociology, providing the basis for his scientific sociological methodology, through which he sought to apply the social gospel to American society. Where he differed with Small was that where Small called for and professed to use a scientific methodology, Giddings focused on actually spelling out a scientific method of analysis for sociology.

As Vidich and Lyman (1985) state,

Giddings's God yields his secrets if one asks the right questions. Mathematical equations and entities provide the appropriate means of discovering the Light, a way of changing the world for the better, a kind of functional equivalent of prayer . . . opening a way to perfect the social order. (P. 109)

For Giddings, God's intentions were discernable and could be yielded if one asked the right questions. And mathematical equations provided the means for asking the right questions. Giddings ([1896] 1970) is, thus, best remembered for establishing a scientific methodology for sociology, one based on statistical measures. His students, who would become known as "Giddings men," were instrumental in bringing statistical measures to bear on social policy reform. Indeed, Paul Kellog, a student of Giddings, carried out the first major sociological survey. The Pittsburgh Survey, as it is known, conducted from 1907 to 1909, used interviewing and statistical inferences for public service.

Reflecting the Social Gospellers' belief in obtaining useful facts . . . Kellog urged his survey staff to regard "the standard ahead of us" as "piled-up actuality." Ultimately the findings would be used to establish "relations," to "project" the survey's work "into the future," and to suggest practical solutions to particular problems. These solutions, in turn, would be carried forth by "local initiative . . . to shoulder the responsibilities which the facts show to be obvious." The facts were to speak for themselves to the makers of social policy. (Vidich and Lyman 1985:130)

It was no coincidence that the Pittsburgh Survey was underwritten by the Social Science Research Council, funded by John D. Rockefeller (a practicing Baptist) and other wealthy Christians who saw their wealth as being held in trust for God, with themselves as stewards. The Pittsburgh Survey became a model for Protestant reformers who used social surveys to support their view of the social gospel.

Through the survey, American sociology set its feet firmly on the ground of statistical study and started on a road toward "practical" social reform. At the time, this meant an alliance with the Progressive movement and a cooperative attitude toward those entrepreneurs and captains of industry who sought to soften the prevailing "tooth and claw" version of Social Darwinism with their own Protestant-inspired stewardship. (Vidich and Lyman 1985:131)

Giddings, therefore, can easily be classified as within the moral sociology tradition, given his belief in sociology as a scientific mechanism for the implementation of the social gospel. His comingling of statistical sociology and religious reform would, however, be lost as sociology opted for the scientific over the reform aspects. However, this would not come to pass for a few more years.

## THE REJECTION OF SOCIAL DARWINISM AND EARLY AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

Arguably, the two major critics of social Darwinism among the early American sociologists were Lester Frank Ward and W. E. B. Du Bois. Each, in his own way, attempted to fuse science and morality in their rejection of what they considered to be an insidious ideology that had a major role in supporting an unjust status quo.

### Lester Frank Ward (1841–1913)

Ward fashioned a morally based scientific sociology as a framework for rejecting social Darwinism and as a basis for instituting social reform. To this end, he (Ward 1883) introduced the notion of *telic forces* (the forces of human design), which could direct the laws of nature.

Man is not the subject but the master of nature, and all progress is achieved by the conscious exercise of that mastery over the impersonal and chaotic forces of nature. This mastery over nature distinguishes man from all creatures here below. All of nature and all forms of life are subject to the iron laws of evolution, but man and man alone, through the psychic forces of mind and spirit, can control and direct those laws. (Commager 1967:xxxviii)

Ward's emphasis on *telic forces* represents his total rejection of the social Darwinism of Spencer and Sumner. From this point of view, natural forces could be controlled by human action and Ward was an outspoken critic of any

laissez-faire approach. As civilizations progressed, human factors came to play a greater and greater role in the advancement of behavior. Social phenomena should not be left to work out their progress unaided. Education was the key for Ward for inducing social change. His *Applied Sociology* (Ward 1906) placed him squarely on the side of the social activists and reformers, with his championing of universal public education as providing the best chance for solving social problems and enhancing social progress. Education should not be the sole province of the upper classes as had been the case historically. Nor should it be the province only of men, and Ward strongly advocated education for women.

Ward (1883) called for a “sociocracy,” a society where every man and woman would be allowed to develop to his or her fullest capacity and come to control his or her destiny. Additionally, Ward believed that a small group of individuals should manage the society, envisioning education as the key to producing this class of managers. “As a contribution to this end, Ward proposed the establishment of a national academy of the social sciences, to train public administrators and study the great social problems of the age” (Commager 1967:xxxvi).

This idea of Ward’s, like many of his other ideas, never came to pass. Still, although contemporary sociologists have often forgotten Ward, he did leave sociology with an important legacy. He was among the first sociologists to challenge the doctrine of laissez-faire, and he championed the notion that human beings through the use of their intellect could influence social reform. In addition, he was an early feminist, rallying against the exclusion of women from education. And in relation to a moral sociology, he constantly advocated a sociology that was one “of the liberation instead of the restraint of human activity” (Ward 1898:247).

### W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963)

At the heart of W. E. B. Du Bois’s sociology were the moral imperatives of freedom, social justice, and equality for all humankind. Indeed, Du Bois’s sociology provided a theoretical base within which to understand, to examine, and most important, to rectify inequality and injustice in the United States and in the world.

Du Bois, throughout his life sought to amass a body of knowledge that he hoped would advance human understanding and thereby promote greater freedom and democracy for all people. For Du Bois, research that was not designed and carried out to achieve social justice was worthless. He wholeheartedly believed in the moral imperative to usher in a free society in which blacks and all other minorities could participate fully. Originally, he held that sociology through its use of the empirical method of applying science to social problems would help change conditions as people saw the injustice of racism and other forms of discrimination. This was the basic principle

behind *The Philadelphia Negro* (Du Bois [1899] 1970), which over a century later can still be read as a model of sound scientific research. In the work, Du Bois interviewed over 5,000 blacks as he documented the effects of racial discrimination. His conclusions went against the so-called scientific thought of his time, which held that blacks were genetically inferior. Arguing from a scientific and structural perspective, DuBois offered documentation that poverty, neglect, and racial discrimination were responsible for the plight of blacks in America. This was a theme he took up throughout his life. In particular, he was arguably the leading critic of a particular form of social Darwinism—“scientific racism” (the view that science lent support to the genetic inferiority of the blacks). It needs to be noted that although it was never the intention of Darwin (he never referred to race in his studies), his principle of natural selection (the belief that natural organisms least equipped for survival were eliminated in the evolutionary process) was used to buttress racism.

In the name of science, Du Bois was oftentimes a lone voice taking on the “scientific racists,” the eugenics movement, and the early psychologists of intelligence, all who espoused views of racial inferiority. This, at the time, was no small task, given the prestige of the scientists who supported the view of racial inferiority. As Taylor (1981) states, “The inherent and immutable inferiority of the black race was trumpeted in both scientific and popular channels by physical and social scientists” (p. 449). What Du Bois did was painstakingly dismantle the major arguments used by advocates of scientific racism through the use of his own scientific method for conducting research on blacks (Goodwin and Scimecca 2006).

However, although his conclusions were well-argued and backed up by empirical data, his work was mostly ignored by white society, and as Du Bois began to doubt that research and logic by themselves could change peoples’ minds, he became more and more of a political activist. Still, whether in his scientific study of blacks, such as *The Philadelphia Negro* (Du Bois [1899] 1970), in his organization of the Atlanta Conferences, which accumulated statistical data on the plight of American blacks, and in his critique of the scientific racists, or in his political activism in helping to found the NAACP and in his editorials in the official journal of the NAACP, *The Crisis*, his life and writings were so intertwined that he can be seen as an exemplar of what it means to advocate a moral sociology. Du Bois was a through-going humanist, one who always believed that people are the measure of all things, that freedom was paramount, and that research needed to serve in an emancipatory capacity or it was useless information. That his influence as a social critic and political activist oftentimes overshadowed his sociology should not detract from the recognition he deserves as an early founder of American sociology and a principal advocate of a moral sociology.

## THE RISE OF OBJECTIVE SOCIOLOGY

I've shown how a number of prominent early American sociologists at the turn of the century, with the notable exception of William Graham Sumner, saw the young discipline of sociology as a moral science, one driven by an ethical imperative to improve the lives of people. However, by the 1930s, this view of sociology had changed dramatically as sociologists rejected a humanistically oriented sociology for what they considered to be an objective, value-free discipline. While there are numerous reasons for this transition, two stand out from the others: (1) the use of science as the means for legitimizing sociology in the university and (2) the nonthreatening nature of an objective science to the status quo. To best understand the importance of science at the time when sociology was seeking to legitimize itself as a discipline worthy of study in the university, we need to look at how graduate American higher education developed and became transformed by the rise of science into a nonthreatening objective entity, one that offered no substantive critique of the political structure.

### The Rise of the American University

Johns Hopkins, founded in 1876, was the first graduate university to devote itself to the ideal of research. With an emphasis on the discovery of knowledge, the graduate universities went into the disseminating end of the process, and Johns Hopkins became the first university to establish a university press. The University of Chicago quickly followed suit.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, science came into its own in American higher education and in the process solidified the structure of the university as we know it today. Science courses began to proliferate. Nonphysical or natural science disciplines, seeing the handwriting on the wall, began to imitate the sciences. Social studies became social science, and psychology broke with philosophy and began to emphasize the experimental approach; even philosophy began to look toward positivism (Scimecca 1980).

By the 1920s, this emphasis on science led to the rejection of the social amelioration approach so much a part of the sociology of Small, Addams, Giddings, Ward, and Du Bois. Scientific sociology was to be objective and not value laden. Positivism and its dictum that only what could be measured was worthy of scientific study became the byword of sociological methodology; anything less was dismissed as "armchair theorizing." According to Bannister (1987:3), this objective sociology took three forms. First, like behaviorism (only behaviors, not intentions, mattered), it confined itself to the observable and external elements of human behavior. Experience was seen as the only viable source of knowledge. Second, rigorous methods of analysis needed to be applied to the collected data. Such staples of research as the case study, participant

observation, and even the comparative methods used by the Chicago School of Sociology were not deemed scientific enough because they did not use statistics. Third, and last, sociologists were to observe strict neutrality when it came to providing data that could affect public policy decisions. Moral judgments and ethical standards had no place in a positivistic, scientific, objective sociology; they had no place in the university.

This shift in sociology from social amelioration to positivistic science can be seen in the thought of three men who were instrumental in instituting these changes from a moral to an objective sociology: Robert Park, Franklin H. Giddings (whose Christian sociological approach we looked at previously), and William F. Ogburn. How the vision of sociology of these men affected the two major centers of early twentieth century sociology—the University of Chicago and Columbia University—as these institutions were caught up in the need to legitimize themselves in the science-dominated world of higher education is vital to an understanding of how American sociology lost its humanistic orientation.

### Robert Park (1864–1944)

Robert Park was a leading figure in the transition from sociology as a moral discipline at the University of Chicago to its claim to be an objective science devoid of any moral imperative.

Originally a newspaper reporter, he earned an M.A. in psychology from Harvard and a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Heidelberg. After completing his graduate studies, Park took a job with the famous African American leader Booker T. Washington and worked as Washington's secretary and assistant for nine years. Then, in 1914, at the age of 50, Park embarked on still another career. He accepted an offer to teach a summer course at the University of Chicago. Shortly afterward, he joined the department as a full-time member and from then on proceeded to change the nature of sociology at Chicago from its ameliorative mode to a purely objective science mode.

I noted previously that the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, since its founding by Albion Small, was characterized by its activism, with its sociologists in conjunction with Jane Addams and the women of Hull-House applying sociological research to bettering the conditions of the people of Chicago. Park, as he replaced Small as the dominant figure at the University of Chicago, changed all this. Rauschenbush (1979) even quotes Park as saying, "A moral man cannot be a sociologist" (p. 97). What Park did was to equate the sociology prior to his arrival at Chicago to social work, which he saw as unscientific. The ministerial-trained sociologists of Chicago and the women of Hull-House were labeled by Park as religious do-gooders and hence not to be taken seriously.<sup>4</sup>

Park (Park and Burgess 1921) had been impressed with the work of Herbert Spencer, in particular by Spencer's

naturalist conception of society. Claiming Spencer ([1873] 1961) as an influence, Park developed a new scientific approach to studying social phenomena, what he called “human ecology,” “borrowing the concept of ecology from . . . plant biologists. Human ecology reinforced Spencer’s analogy to society as an organism by depicting the city as an organism with a typical natural history” (Breslau 1990:433). Park first used this approach, which later became known as the “social ecology” model, to institute a new method of research for social policy studies, one devoid of any hint of social amelioration. Park projected Spencer’s organicist analogy of society onto spatial coordinates. The social organism was no longer an abstraction but was located in the concrete basis of the city through maps and empirical field research. (That Park does not acknowledge that Addams and the women of Hull-House introduced this methodology in *Hull-House Maps and Strategies*, instead crediting Darwin and Spencer, can easily be interpreted as an example of his own biases.) And, according to Deegan (1988), a price was paid for Park’s methods of research “This new approach was more acceptable to businessmen and the academic community, but much less powerful and effective in everyday life” (p. 144).

It needs to be noted that Park’s science was modeled on biology and did not have a quantitative component. In fact, Park argued adamantly against the use of statistics and social surveys in his teaching and writings, preferring field research instead. However, fieldwork was costly and could not be realized without outside funding. (Among the many ironies in the origins of American sociology is that over the objections of Park, who was so adamant in calling for a scientific sociology, science in sociology came to be equated with statistics, something that Park was equally adamant against.)

Between 1921 and 1929, eighteen studies by sociology students were published, all subsidized by foundation support. Most of the funding came from a single foundation, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, which provided facilities and overhead, and matched all grants from local sources. (Breslau 1990:439)

This combination of Park’s denigration of social reform and the need for funding proved to be too much of an obstacle for the moral sociologists at Chicago to overcome. Although not by any means social Darwinists, Park and his colleagues and students carried out empirically based field studies in what they considered to be a purely objective manner. These studies, in complete opposition to Small’s original Chicago School of Sociology and the policy studies of Addams and the women of Hull-House, eschewed any type of intervention and did little if anything to change the conditions of the people of Chicago. In short, these studies were safe and did not pose any threat to the status quo. “This new scientific standard assured that the recipients of funds would refrain from using their research

to make calls for sweeping legislation, especially calls for state intervention in the economy, because do so would undermine their claims to scientific authority” (Breslau 1990:442). It was a compromise that kept the business community from directly interfering in the dispersal of funds, but it rendered sociology impotent in carrying out any meaningful social reforms.

With the subsequent appointment of William Fielding Ogburn to the Department of Sociology at Chicago in 1927, the transition from a social reformist department to an “objective” scientific one was complete. However, before looking at the influence of Ogburn, we need to turn back to what had occurred at Columbia University, where the so-called Giddings men, of whom Ogburn was the most prominent, had been trained in a new type of scientific sociology—one that had the use of statistics as its foundation.

## THE GIDDINGS MEN

In the decade before World War I, Columbia University began to emerge as a leading center of graduate sociology education in the United States. “Between 1908 and 1914, the department granted twenty-five of the fifty-six doctorates in sociology given by American universities, the Chicago sociology department running a distant second with eleven” (Bannister 1987:77). Much of this shift was due to the influence of Franklin Giddings and his introduction of statistics into sociology.

Columbia was a favorable setting for the advance of statistical methods in part because Columbia officials regarded such methods as a way to display their university’s adherence to the research practices of a scientific institution, while simultaneously gaining a distinctive competitive edge, and identity-mark that set it apart from its rivals. (Camic and Xie 1994:778)

While still a vital part of the social gospel movement in sociology, Giddings’s sociology was very different from that of the other social gospellers due to his championing of statistical methods, something of which Small was highly critical.<sup>5</sup> In his *Inductive Sociology* Giddings (1901) introduced three elements into what he called the “new statistics”: (1) the ranging of figures to establish averages, medians, maximums, and minimums; (2) the calculation of the ‘standard deviation’ from the mean; and (3) the use of the ‘coefficient of correlation’” (Bannister 1987:76). While Giddings did not often employ statistical procedures in his own work, he nevertheless “set the terms under which statistics became the hallmark of scientific sociology in America” (Vidich and Lyman 1985:111). For Giddings, statistics was the inductive method par excellence.

It would be those sociologists trained by Giddings during his tenure at Columbia in a heavily statistical sociology



who would collectively come to be known as Giddings men. It was these Giddings men, much to the chagrin of Giddings, who transformed sociology into a rigid quantitative, statistically oriented discipline, one that drained sociology of its moral basis.

Among the most important “Giddings’ men,” were William Fielding Ogburn (1886–1959), Howard W. Odum (1884–1954), and F. Stuart Chapin (1888–1974). Each served as president of the American Sociological Society (1929, 1930, and 1935, respectively) as did three others—James P. Lichtenberger in 1922, John L. Gillan in 1926, and Frank H. Hawkins in 1938. Giddings himself served two terms (1910 and 1911). (Vidich and Lyman 1985:134)

As had occurred in Chicago with the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation having a great effect on the transition to what was perceived as a scientific and objective sociology, so too did Rockefeller money have an effect, in the form of John D. Rockefeller, who was the main patron for the Russell Sage Foundation and the Social Science Research Council. These two foundations were instrumental in underwriting the education of Columbia-trained sociologists (Giddings men) in what was hailed as a more objective discipline and, I would reiterate, one that would not pose any threat to the status quo. As previously said, foremost among the Giddings men was William Fielding Ogburn, who along with Park was instrumental in the transition of sociology from a humanistically oriented discipline to a scientifically oriented one.

### William Fielding Ogburn (1886–1959)

Although Ogburn is still known for his theoretical contribution of the concept *cultural lag* (the view that the technological and material segments of society change more rapidly than the other segments producing a cultural lag) into sociological theory in his *Social Change* (Ogburn [1922] 1966), it is his commitment to a quantitative sociology that rejected ethical judgments, both in the academy and in the public policy arena, that constitutes his unique stamp on sociology. As Laslett (1991) writes, Ogburn, throughout his academic career

advocated the position that sociology had to become more scientific, by which he meant empirical, objective, and quantitative. For him, to become scientific, sociology needed to distance itself from the moral and political reform interests and activities that had been characteristic of its earlier history. Social problems were of interest to the scientific sociologist as a subject for detached study, not involvement. (P. 512)

For Ogburn, the role of the sociologist was to measure social trends in society, not to change or shape them. This approach to social problems fit in quite nicely with the attitude of the government, which wanted factual information on social phenomena without interpretation by social scientists, and Ogburn’s work outside academia exemplified

this role for the social scientist. During the 1920s, Ogburn represented sociology at the Social Science Research Council; he was the research director on President Herbert Hoover’s Committee on Social Trends and served on several New Deal agencies during the Depression (Laslett 1991). Ogburn was thus a powerful force in the discipline of sociology as well as in the public policy sphere. And with his appointment to the sociology faculty of the University of Chicago in 1927, the last vestiges of any moral sociology there were undermined. The University of Chicago and Columbia University, the two major sociological centers of graduate sociological education at the time, were now both firmly in the camp of the “objectivists,” who denigrated any type of sociology that was not statistical and value free.

Just as Park had seen to the erosion of a reform-oriented sociology at Chicago by pushing a field-based empirical sociology, one based on observation and classification, Ogburn ushered in the replacement of Park’s vision of sociology with a sociology that was based on a rigorous set of procedures, the more statistically sophisticated the better (Bannister 1987:175). With Ogburn’s Presidential Address to the *American Sociological Society* in 1929 on the objective, scientific role of the sociologist, any morally oriented sociology with an ethical imperative to help people, if it was not already a thing of the past, was now only a vision held by a small minority of sociologists at minor colleges and universities. In one of sociology’s major ironies, the most famous sociologist whom Franklin Giddings had trained dealt the final blow to the moral science Giddings had envisioned.

As sociology entered the depression years, mainstream sociology ceased altogether to be a moral science; it was instead defined by sterile, value-free quantitative methods of research. In essence, sociology and the statistically sophisticated technicians who dominated the discipline put themselves up for sale to the highest bidders. The sociologist was no threat to the powerful, no threat to the status quo. Sociology produced knowledge for policymakers, knowledge that was statistical, narrow in scope, and ruffled no feathers. Positivism and objectivism had driven out moral philosophy, and sociology lost its ethical and moral center. Park and Ogburn’s vision of sociology had triumphed. The dream of the vast majority of the early American sociologists had been subverted in the name of a value-neutral sociology—one that, for the most part, ignored the realities of power and inequality, a sociology that opted instead for technical precision. However, there were a few exceptions to this trend—the most prominent being C. Wright Mills and Alfred McClung Lee, who were instrumental in keeping a humanist approach to sociology alive.<sup>6</sup>

### C. Wright Mills (1916–1962)

C. Wright Mills attempted to fashion a critical, humanist sociology that would help liberate individuals. His most

precise articulation of this humanist sociology is to be found in *Character and Social Structure* (Gerth and Mills 1953), written with Hans Gerth, and in *The Sociological Imagination* (Mills 1959), which is essentially a reformulation of the framework posited in *Character and Social Structure*, where the interrelationship of the individual and social structure is offered (Scimecca 1977). The major difference between the two works is that *The Sociological Imagination* is much more critical of mainstream sociology. In these two works and in *White Collar* (Mills 1951) and *The Power Elite* (Mills 1956), Mills offers a sociology that is critical and liberating with his notion of how the individual can overcome the constraints of social structure.

The product of his early training in pragmatism,<sup>7</sup> Mills never gave up the notion of an autonomous individual who could use reason to ensure his or her freedom. To be free, the individual had to make the connection between “private troubles” and “public issues” (Mills 1959); she or he had to use “the sociological imagination” to make the connection between biography and history and use this information in the support of liberation. The sociologist needed to

study the structural limits of human decision in an attempt to find points of effective intervention, in order to know what can and what must be structurally changed if the role of explicit decision in history-making is to be enlarged. (Mills 1959:174)

Mills’s humanist sociology enables the individual to transcend the realm of private troubles and come to see that structural problems are at the heart of alienation. The use of the sociological imagination could lead to freedom when and if the individual became aware that “rationally organized arrangements . . . often . . . are means of manipulation” (Mills 1959:169).

Mills’s sociology presented a picture of human beings as potentially free but constrained by power relations. In his view, some people (those with power) are freer than others and are therefore responsible for their actions. History may be made behind people’s backs but not behind everyone’s back. There are varying degrees of power and freedom. Mills’s humanist sociology is a sociology of moral responsibility in the face of societal constraint, in essence a study of how freedom is being eroded.

Mills’s sociology is an exemplar of what humanist sociology should be. It is an attempt to realize the promise of the Enlightenment—the fusion of morals with science. Mills offers a sociology that has as its basis the moral responsibility to create a just and humane society. The main purpose in amassing a body of knowledge is to serve human needs. The *is* and the *ought* are combined.

### Alfred McClung Lee (1907–1992)

As previously noted, Alfred McClung Lee was a cofounder of the AHS in 1976.<sup>8</sup> In addition, he was not only the first president of the AHS but was also the leading theoretician of humanist sociology.

Like Robert Park, Lee began his career as a journalist, but there the similarities ended. In his long career, Lee was a socially active sociologist, one who embodied the Enlightenment vision of a moral social science. For Lee (1973), the challenge of sociology was to develop and disseminate knowledge about the restrictions on human beings and to provide blue-prints for social action to overcome these restrictions. Sociologists had to be both social critics and social activists, and he was adamant in his condemnation of those who didn’t use their research for establishing a humane society. In his biting and witty style, Lee (1973) writes that sociologists

expend endless research grants and fill many volumes with refinements of semantics, methodology, and theory which—like the fisherman-craftsman’s dry flies—are for the purposes of conspicuous distinction rather than production. They always conclude their reports on the high note that they have made a ringing case for further research on the subject—that is, for more research grants. (P. 183)

Perhaps Lee’s most stinging criticism of the loss of a moral and activist base for sociology can be found in *Sociology for Whom* (1978), which is an expansion of the themes spelled out in his 1976 Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association. Sociology, without a moral foundation, according to Lee (1978), is for sale to the highest bidder, and he says, “Too many come to believe that ‘truth’ and ‘scientific objectivity’ are things to be packaged for the tastes and services of ‘important’ denizens of the worlds of commerce and politics” (p. 20). Asking the question “sociology for whom?” Lee does not like the answer given by mainstream sociology. Sociology must be for everyone, not just for the powerful. Sociology must be humanistic, and at the end of *Sociology for Whom*, Lee (1978) sees this tradition embodied in the AHS.

What will be useful at this time is a scientific body that will bring together those who are not impressed by the deceptive appearances of exclusive control of sociological legitimacy by our existing organizations. The Association for Humanist Sociology is such an organization. It seeks to affiliate people whose curiosity is constantly roused by the realization that ‘things are seldom what they seem.’ It is attracting sociologists committed to the service of humanity, to the age-long highroad of humanist social investigation and social theory. Its sociology implies acceptance of a humanistic ethic as a self-imposed mandate. That ethic implies not only service to broad human interests and concerns but also accuracy in observation, mistrust of formulas and methodologies, use of statistics not as irrefutable ‘hard facts’ but as a medium for the summarization and analysis of human observations, search for the most tenable and practical theories, and freedom from an acceptance of outside controls over one’s scientific work. (P. 217)

For Lee (1978), sociology was a discipline that “tries to cope with the problem of people in all of their humanity” (p. 92). For him, the only worthwhile sociology was a humanist sociology.

## HUMANIST SOCIOLOGY TODAY

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For humanist sociologists, the implications of what has been presented in the preceding pages are clear. Sociology began as a moral discipline, having its origins in the Enlightenment and in the call for freedom and the development of human capabilities to their fullest extent. So too with the origins of American sociology at the turn of the twentieth century. But this “promise of sociology” has been discarded by the majority of sociologists. Thus, humanist sociologists remain disenchanted with conventional sociology and continue to emphasize a value commitment in their research as they analyze the problems of equality and social justice today. With studies in such areas as peace (Wolfe 2004), poverty (Leggett 1998), social class (Dolgon 2005), the media (Starr 2001), crime (Pepinski 1991), the empowerment of women (Bystydzienski and Bird 2006), and economic justice (Lindenfeld 2004), to name just some of the activist research being carried on, humanist sociologists continue to offer a value-committed research agenda for the most important public policy

issues facing the United States and the world today. Such an agenda will, without doubt, continue into the future, for humanist sociologists believe it is a tragic mistake for sociologists to ignore sociology’s history. The early history of American sociology testifies to a vision of a moral science, one that emphasized the important ethical imperative for freedom, a vision that was value laden, and that, in the words of Alfred McClung Lee (1988), was “a sociology for people,” not a sociology for bureaucrats, or technicians, or policymakers.

Using a nonpositivistic epistemological foundation, humanist sociologists employ their methods of research to answer the question originally posed by the Enlightenment *philosophes*: “How can social science help to fashion a humane society in which freedom can best be realized?” Only when mainstream sociology reclaims its origins and it seeks answers to this question can it again become relevant to the lives of people. In the meantime, this is what humanist sociology is all about, and it will continue to shape the research agenda of humanist sociologists in the twenty-first century.

## FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES AND EPISTEMOLOGY

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Over the past 10 years of teaching courses on research methods and feminist approaches to methodologies and epistemologies, a recurring question from our students concerns the distinctiveness of feminist approaches to methods, methodologies, and epistemologies. This key question is posed in different ways: Is there a specifically feminist method? Are there feminist methodologies and epistemologies, or simply feminist approaches to these? Given diversity and debates in feminist theory, how can there be a consensus on what constitutes “feminist” methodologies and epistemologies?

Answers to these questions are far from straightforward given the continually evolving nature of feminist reflections on the methodological and epistemological dimensions and dilemmas of research. This chapter on feminist methodologies and epistemologies attempts to address these questions by tracing historical developments in this area, by considering what may be unique about feminist epistemologies and feminist methodologies, by reviewing some of sociology’s key contributions to this area of scholarship and by highlighting some key emergent trends.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the theoretical and historical development of feminist epistemologies, followed by a similar overview of feminist methodologies. The final section discusses how feminist

epistemologies and feminist methodologies have begun to merge into an area called *feminist research* and details some key pillars of contemporary and emergent work in this area.

### FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES

Twenty-five years ago, Lorraine Code, a Canadian feminist philosopher, posed what she called an “outrageous question.” In asking “is the sex of the knower epistemologically significant” (Code 1981), she then went on to chart the contours of a feminist epistemological approach as distinct from traditional or Anglo-American mainstream epistemology (see Code 1991). Code was just one of many feminists who, in the 1970s, began grappling with issues of masculinity, power, and authority in knowledge creation (see Gilligan 1977; Miller 1976; Smith 1974). From the outset, these challenges were being made across many disciplines. In the natural, physical, and behavioral sciences, the emphasis was on exposing masculine bias in science as perhaps best revealed in the valuing of traditional masculine characteristics (e.g., reason, rationality, autonomy, disconnection) (see Gilligan 1982; Keller 1985; Lloyd 1983). Indeed, feminist epistemological discussions owe a great debt to feminist scientists who relentlessly critiqued the

effects of gender bias in the collection, interpretation, and organization of data on sex differences in behavioral, biological, and biobehavioral scientific research. Documenting the exclusive use of male subjects in both experimental and clinical biomedical research, as well as the selection of male activity and concomitant male-dominant animal populations, feminists pointed to the blatant invisibility of females in research protocols (Haraway 1988, 1991; Keller 1983, 1985; Keller and Longino 1998; Longino and Doell 1983; Rose 1994).

While feminist scientists and scholars were scrutinizing research in the natural and physical sciences, feminist philosophers were actively engaged with defining the relationship between feminism and epistemology. Defining epistemology as “a philosophical inquiry into the nature of knowledge, what justifies a belief, and what we mean when we say that a claim is true” (Alcoff 1998:vii), it is not surprising that feminist philosophers would find this fertile ground for investigation. Whether the question of how “feminisms intersect epistemology” (Alcoff and Potter 1993) was shared by philosophers has been another matter. As Helen Longino (1997) has pointed out, “The idea of feminist epistemology throws some philosophers into near apoplexy” (p. 19). Feminist philosophers have, nevertheless, struggled with “many of the problems that have vexed traditional epistemology, among them the nature of knowledge itself, epistemic agency, justification, objectivity and whether and how epistemology should be naturalized” (Alcoff and Potter 1993:1). While addressing these traditional epistemological questions, feminist epistemologists have done so with a focus on the role of gender. Lennon and Whitford (1994), for instance, argued that “feminist epistemology consists . . . in attention to epistemological concerns arising out of feminist projects, which prompt reflection of the nature of knowledge and our methods for attaining it” (p. 13). Yet while there seems to have been some consensus on how specific issues required feminist analysis, the question still persisted as to whether such analysis needed to also generate specifically *feminist* epistemologies or could simply work with existing philosophical approaches.

This question remained at the backdrop of feminist discussions of epistemology throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, what marked feminist epistemologies as unique for at least a decade is a threefold characterization initially proposed by Sandra Harding (1987b): feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemologies, and transitional (postmodern)<sup>1</sup> epistemologies. As discussed later in this chapter, these epistemological categories have since given way to greater complexity. Nevertheless, it is useful to provide a brief overview of their central contrasting and overlapping tenets.

Feminist empiricism was a response that emerged largely from feminist scientists and feminist critiques of science. Rooted in diverse philosophical traditions (e.g., Giere and Richardson 1996; Quine 1966, 1969), feminist empiricists have considered how feminist values can

inform empirical inquiry, and how scientific methods can be improved in light of feminist demonstrations of sex bias in traditional positivistic practices of science. At the risk of simplifying a very complex set of arguments, feminist empiricism has three key elements. The first is the view that all observation, “facts,” and “findings” are value tinged and that value judgments play a critical role in rigorous empirical inquiry: “There is a world that shapes and constrains what is reasonable to believe, and . . . it does so by impinging on our sensory receptors” (Nelson 1990:20; see also Campbell 1998; Longino 1990).<sup>2</sup> The second key element is the notion of empiricism as a “theory of evidence” and, further that “all evidence for science is, in the end, sensory evidence” (Longino 1990:21). Third, “knowers” are not individuals but are rather communities and more specifically science communities and epistemological communities. “Communities, not individuals ‘acquire’ and possess knowledge” (Longino 1990:14; see also Campbell 1998; Longino 1993, 2002; Nelson 1990, 1993; Walby 2001).<sup>3</sup>

While feminist empiricists are linked to postpositivist assumptions around different communities of knowers battling for truths and legitimacy in knowledge making, feminist standpoint epistemologists have challenged the differential power that groups have to define knowledge, and they argued that marginalized groups hold a particular claim to knowing. At the core of standpoint epistemology is their assertion that they represent the world from a particular socially situated perspective, which represents epistemic privilege or authority. This epistemic privileging is located in the standpoint of the marginalized or disadvantaged, and all women, regardless of social location, occupy this position. “Women’s experiences, informed by feminist theory, provide a potential grounding for more complete and less distorted knowledge claims than do men’s” (Harding 1987b:184; see also Hartsock 1983, 1985).<sup>4</sup> Standpoint epistemology has continually emphasized how knowledge must begin in women’s “everyday/evernight world” (Smith 1999:5; see also Smith 1987) and how women’s lives are the “places from which to start off knowledge projects” (Harding 1991:61). Standpoint feminists have also been at pains to point out that these experiences, everyday/evernight worlds, or standpoints must also be located, and analyzed, within broader relations of ruling or social structures (Smith 1987, 1999). As Nancy Hartsock (1998) has made clear, a standpoint is “achieved rather than obvious, a mediated rather than an immediate understanding” (p. 110). Similarly, Patricia Hill Collins (1997) has highlighted that standpoint is about “historically shared, group-based experiences.”

While very diverse as a theoretical strand, postmodernism’s impact on feminist epistemologies has been profound for a number of reasons. First, it has critiqued the notion of “woman” as a unified *object* of theorizing and as a unified *subject* of knowing (Lugones and Spelman 1983). Second, the strong claim for socially situated knowledges translates into a greater attention to the

concept of reflexivity and to the role of the researcher in constructing knowledge. Third, drawing on Jane Flax's (1990) characterization of postmodernism as "the death of history," the "death of meta-narratives," and the "death of man" (p. 204), the intersections between feminism and postmodernism have led to the articulation of a plurality of perspectives, none of which can claim objectivity or transcend into a "view from nowhere" (Haraway 1991). On the negative side, postmodernism can also be associated with a lack of feminist analysis, judgment, politics, or theorization. As described by Seyla Benhabib (1995), "A certain version of postmodernism is not only incompatible with but would undermine the very possibility of feminism as the theoretical articulation of the emancipatory aspirations of women" (p. 29; Brodribb 1992; but see Elam 1992).

While initially cast as three fundamentally contrasting frameworks, Harding's tripartite distinction between feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemologies, and transitional (postmodern) epistemologies has faded in the last 20 years. Indeed, Harding herself predicted this blurring (Harding 1987b, 1991, 1998). More recent debates have focused on how to characterize each strand of feminist epistemology, and indeed whether these are best named as theories, methodologies, or epistemologies (Collins 1997; Hartsock 1998; Smith 1999). Moreover, these oft-cited three categories of feminist epistemologies are clearly inadequate to reflect the wide variety of feminist research since much of it falls between and joins elements of two or three frameworks (see Fraser 1995; Fraser and Nicholson 1990; Haraway 1988, 1991). For example, since postmodern and postcolonial critiques have highlighted the importance of multiple or fragmented perspectives, feminist standpoint has moved in a pluralistic direction, acknowledging many situated standpoints (Collins 1997, 2000; Harding 1993b, 1998; Harding and Norberg 2005; Reynolds 2002; Smith 1999, 2005). At the same time, the focus on empirical evidence and "experience" and an emphasis on communities, rather than individuated knowers, has always signaled at least some convergence between feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint.

Throughout the 1990s, the emphasis on three epistemologies became partially replaced by reflections on the processes of "knowing, knowers and known" (Hawkesworth 1989). Particular questions framing subjectivity and issues of representation and legitimation have come to take center stage in feminist epistemological discussions. Such questions include the following: "Who can be a knower" (Code 1991), "What can be known" (Alcoff 1998), and "How do we know what we know?" (Alcoff 1998). As far back as 1993, Alcoff and Potter recognized that while feminist epistemology had "named recognition," its referent was becoming increasingly obscure (see also Longino 1997).

Any clear "referent" to feminist epistemology was also eroded by the growing influence of postmodern, poststructural, and postcolonial thinking that quashed the idea that

there could be a feminist or even several feminist "ways of knowing." In this vein, feminists working on epistemological questions have found themselves facing the same crises as nonfeminists charting similar terrain. As Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2000) suggest, researchers have begun to face a profound triple "crisis of representation, legitimation and praxis" (see also Atkinson 1992; Clifford 1986; Denzin 1997; Lather 1991; Marcus and Fisher 1986). Often referred to as the "reflexive turn" or the "narrative turn," as found mainly in postmodern and poststructuralist critiques, these crises have created a sense of uncertainty as increasingly complex questions have been raised concerning the status, validity, basis, and authority of knowledge claims (Geertz 1988; Hollway 1989; Richardson 1997).

In light of this backdrop, the question of whether feminists need their own epistemologies began to be reviewed more critically. There were many variations on this question: Would a feminist epistemology simply reverse androcentric epistemology to a gynocentric epistemology? (Duran 1991:14–15). Is "feminist knowledge" or "feminist science" a "contradiction in terms?" (Harding 1987b:182). "What does feminism require of an epistemology?" (Fricker 1994:95). Louise Antony addressed this issue succinctly when she asked, "Do we need in order to accommodate these questions, insights, and projects, a specifically feminist alternative to currently available epistemological frameworks" (Antony 1993:187). Her answer was a resounding "no." Meanwhile, parallel discussions were occurring for feminist researchers, particularly those working with qualitative research projects.

## FEMINIST METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS

Just a few years after Code's "outrageous question," Sandra Harding queried in a well-cited piece: "Is there a feminist method?" While Harding was careful to distinguish between method as "techniques for gathering evidence" and methodology as "a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (Harding 1987a:2–3), the question of feminist versions of each of these has been asked. That is, are there methods that are specifically feminist? Furthermore, what is it that makes feminist approaches to methodology unique?

Feminist sociologists have made important contributions to this debate as they began to criticize positivism as a philosophical framework and, more specifically, its most acute methodological instrument—that of quantitative methods for its practice of detached and objective scientific research and the objectification of research subjects (Graham 1983b; Reinharz 1979). These methodological critiques were well placed against a backdrop of feminist scholarship struggling to find a place for alternative values within the academy. Such concerns emerged out of a sense of despair and anger that knowledge, both academic and

popular, was based on men's lives, male ways of thinking, and directed toward the problems articulated by men. Dorothy Smith (1974) argued that "sociology . . . has been based on and built up within the male social universe" (p. 7) while further lamenting in her seminal work, *The Everyday World as Problematic* (1987), that the lives of women were largely left to novelists or poets. This rendered invisible, within the knowledge academies, women's lives and female-dominated domains such as domestic work and the care of children, the ill, and the elderly (see Finch and Groves 1983; Graham 1983a, 1991). Subsequently, and not surprisingly, where women's lives were studied and theorized, this occurred within male stream lenses. In this vein, British sociologist Hilary Graham (1983b) eloquently asked, "Do her answers fit his questions?" when she observed that women's experiences were being measured within surveys designed on the basis of men's lives. A decade later, and again in Britain, Rosalind Edwards observed that attempts were still being made to fit women's lives into male theories, like trying to "fit a round peg into a square hole" (Edwards 1990:479).

A noteworthy piece by British sociologist Ann Oakley (1981) still stands as one of the most cited articles within this discussion. Challenging the masculine assumptions of "proper interviews" that dominated the sociological textbooks of the time, Oakley argued that some methods were better suited to feminist aims and that these could be viewed as feminist methods. Oakley suggested that, contrary to an objective, standardized, and detached approach to interviewing, the goal of finding out about people through interviewing was "best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (p. 41).<sup>5</sup> Drawing on her interviews with mothers, she maintained that her own identity as a mother came to act as a leveler against a power hierarchy in the interviewee-interviewer relationship:

Where both share the same gender socialization and critical life-experiences, social distance can be minimal. Where both interviewer and interviewee share membership of the same minority group, the basis for equality may impress itself even more urgently on the interviewer's consciousness. (Oakley 1981:55; see also Finch 1984; Stanley and Wise [1983] 1993; Rheinharz 1992)

These perspectives have since been criticized and deconstructed. To name a particular method, methodology, or theory as feminist calls for standards of judgment, which may exclude work that does not fit such criteria. Moreover, feminists have contested notions of mutuality and equality in interviews, highlighting how differing, as well as shared, structural characteristics can impede mutuality and reciprocity (Coterill 1992; Edwards 1990; Glucksmann 1994; Ramazanoglu 1989; Ribbens 1989; Song and Parker 1995). Catherine Reissman (1987) highlighted that "gender and personal involvement may not be

enough for full 'knowing'" (p. 189; see also Ribbens 1998) while Rosalind Edwards (1993) cautioned that

if . . . we accept that there are structurally based divisions between women on the basis of race and/or class that may lead them to have some different interests and priorities, then what has been said about woman-to-woman interviewing may not apply in all situations. (P. 184)

Reflections on the inevitability of power differentials within research have extended into discussions of the "dangers" of the illusion of equality in research relationships, the ethical dilemmas involved in conducting research with disadvantaged or marginalized women, as well as larger epistemological issues involved in attempting to "know" others. Sociologists have been particularly vocal on the first issue of the potential dangers associated with trying to be "friendly" in interviews. Pamela Cotterill (1992), for example, has drawn attention to the "potentially damaging effects of a research technique which encourages friendship in order to focus on very private and personal aspects of people's lives" (p. 597; see also Stacey 1991). While Western-based social scientists have "worried" over such issues (Fine and Wiess 1996:251; see also DeVault 1999), such dangers have perhaps been best articulated by feminists working in contexts where inequalities are acute, such as in low-income communities and in Third World countries. For example, in her preface to her edited collection on *Feminist Dilemmas in Field Work*, Diane Wolf (1996) discusses how her research inadvertently exacerbated the inequalities between herself and her research subjects in Java, Indonesia:

My research was an attempt to analyze and depict their lives, their situation, and the grueling work of factory jobs. . . . I would go on to finish my dissertation, get a Ph.D., get a job based on a talk about this research, make enough money in one month to sustain an entire village for several, publish, and, I hoped, make a career. The money I gave to people of the organizations I contribute to will not be able to change much in the lives of those I worked with. Despite my good intentions, I was making a situation for myself based on structures of poverty and gender inequality. (P. x; see also Hale 1991; Patai 1991; Zavella 1993)

Ironically, criticisms of male stream theories that excluded women began to haunt feminists trying to come up with alternative methodologies that could also marginalize women, albeit inadvertently. Gesa Kirsch (2005) eloquently articulates this point when she writes,

It is perhaps ironic, then, that scholars are discovering that methodological changes intended to achieve feminist ends—increased collaboration, greater interaction, and more open communication with research participants—may have inadvertently reintroduced some of the ethical dilemmas feminist researchers had hoped to eliminate: participants' sense of disappointment, alienation, and potential exploitation. (P. 2163)

By the late 1980s, many feminists opposed the idea of there being distinctive feminist methods or methodologies. Instead, they suggested that many feminists were “simply” doing “good” research. For example, in 1990, feminist criminologist Lorraine Gelsthorpe acknowledged the “difficulty of distinguishing between feminist research and simply ‘good’ research” and asked, “Is feminist research merely ‘old wine in new bottles’?” (Gelsthorpe 1990:105).

While others have concurred that feminist research should be “good” research that provides alternatives to mainstream research, it is also the case that, over the past decade, a large body of scholarship has laid out some key underlying principles that are central to much feminist research.

## FEMINIST RESEARCH

While it is difficult to argue that there is a specifically feminist method, methodology, or epistemology, it is the case that feminist scholars have embraced particular characteristics in their work. First, feminist researchers have long advocated that feminist research should be not just on women, but *for* women and, where possible, with women (DeVault 1990, 1996; Edwards 1990; Fonow and Cook 1991, 2005; Neilsen 1990; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002; Reinharz 1992; Smith 1987, 1989, 1999; Stanley and Wise [1983] 1993). Second, feminist researchers have actively engaged with methodological innovation through challenging conventional or mainstream ways of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data (Code 1995; Gelsthorpe 1990; Lather 2001; Lather and Smithies 1997; Mol 2002; Naples 2003; Richardson 1988, 1997). Initially, this involved challenging positivist frameworks and the dominance of quantitative methods and experimenting with novel ways of documenting and representing women’s experiences or everyday worlds. More recently, however, quantitative methods have been accepted and adopted (McCall 2005; Oakley 1998). Indeed, feminist methodological challenges include a diversity of methodological and epistemological approaches (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002:2). Third, feminist research is concerned with issues of broader social change and social justice (Fonow and Cook 1991, 2005). According to Beverly Skeggs (1994), feminist research is distinct from nonfeminist research because it “begins from the premise that the nature of reality in western society is unequal and hierarchical” (p. 77). In a similar way, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002) note that “feminist research is imbued with particular theoretical, political and ethical concerns that make these varied approaches to social research distinctive” (pp. 2–3).

To these well-established key features of feminist research, we add two further issues—power and reflexivity—which we suggest have become critical within feminist discussions of methods, methodologies, and epistemologies.

## Power: Knowing and Representing Others

Feminism’s most compelling epistemological insight lies in the connections it has made between knowledge and power. (Lennon and Whitford 1994)

As discussed above, early feminist discussions took an optimistic view on power relations between the researcher and the researched. Feminist researchers argued that power differentials in research could be minimized by developing nonhierarchical and “friendly” relationships with respondents (e.g., Oakley 1981). Later feminists critiqued this position, pointing to the inevitability of power imbalances in research. Feminist sociologists now recognize that researchers and respondents have a “different and unequal relation to knowledge” (Glucksmann 1994:150) and that within most research projects, “The final shift of power between the researcher and the respondent is balanced in favor of the researcher, for it is she who eventually walks away” (Cotterill 1992:604; see also Reinharz 1992; Stacey 1991; Wolf 1996). The focus of much current feminist scholarship has moved on from the question of *whether* there are power inequalities between researchers and respondents, to consider *how* power influences knowledge production and construction processes.

Questions about who produces knowledge, “Who can be a knower?” (Code 1991), “Whose knowledge?” (Harding 1991), and “Who speaks for whom?” (Code 1995; Mohanty, Russo, and Torres 1991) have become critical in contemporary feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial climates. Women of color working within Western contexts and feminists working in Third World settings have highlighted “otherness,” exclusion, racism, and ethnocentrism. Key issues have included the interrelatedness of race and selective entitlement to theory production (Hunter 2004; Sandoval 2000a, 2000b); intersections of global capitalism and feminist transnational identities (Ferguson 2004; Schutte 1993, 1998, 2000; Shohat 2001), the question of whether feminists in dominant cultures can ever *know* subaltern cultures (Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Ladson-Billings 2000; Mohanty et al. 1991; Oyewumi 2000; Spivak 1993), the challenges of knowing transnational lesbian and gay identities (Bunch 1987; Gopinath 2005), and the role and representation of subordinate “others” in the production of knowledge (Bernal 2002; Christian 1996).

Issues of power are also present in our attempts to come to know and represent the intimate details of others who live in close proximity to us. Even where researchers and respondents share structural and cultural similarities of, for example, gender, ethnicity, class, and age, this does not guarantee knowing, or “better” knowing. Being an “insider”—whatever this actually means—is not a straightforward route to knowing (Narayan 1993; Olesen 1998; Stanley 1994; Zavella 1993). Feminists have emphasized, and reflected on, the “tensions” and “dilemmas” (e.g., Ribbens and Edwards 1998; Wolf 1996) involved in coming to know and represent the narratives, experiences, or



lives of others. They have questioned how “voices of participants are to be heard, with what authority, and in what form?” (Olesen 1998:315). They have asked *whether* and *how* the “experience” (Scott 1992, 1994) or “voice” (Beiser 1993; Charmaz 1993; Wilkinson 1994) of another can be accessed. They have noted the dangers of presuming to know, speak for, or advocate for others. Lorraine Code (1995) echoes the views of many feminist researchers grappling with power dilemmas around knowing, representing, and advocating for others. She writes,

Only rarely can we presume to understand exactly how it is for someone else even of our own class, race, sexual orientation and social group. These issues become exacerbated when feminists claim to speak for others across the complexities of difference, with the consequences that the politics of speaking for, about, and on behalf of other women is *one of the most contested areas in present day feminist activism and research* [italics added]. (P. 30)

As the site where research participants’ voices, accounts, or narratives become “transformed” into theory, we have argued that the interpretation stages and processes of empirical research are critical to feminist concerns with power, exploitation, knowing, and representation (Doucet and Mauthner 2002; Mauthner and Doucet 1998, 2003; see also Glucksmann 1994). With the exception of participatory research or collaborative research processes (e.g., Code and Burt 1995; Davies et al. 2004; Ristock and Pennell 1996; Siltanen, Willis, and Scobie, forthcoming), the analysis and interpretation of others’ narratives usually take place “back in the office,” in isolation from our respondents, research users, and colleagues. Both the analytic processes and the “raw” narrative transcripts tend to remain hidden and invisible. This, we suggest, compels researchers to be reflexive about these processes of interpretation and power and how methodology and epistemology intertwine during this phase of research. We argue for accountable and responsible knowing and emphasize the critical importance of being reflexive and transparent about our knowledge construction processes (see Doucet and Mauthner 2002; Mauthner and Doucet 1998, 2003).

While feminists have long debated issues of power vis-à-vis research respondents “in the field,” only recently have they turned this critical reflexive gaze onto their practices and relationships with collaborators “in the office,” and the influence of institutional power dynamics on what becomes “known” and how (Gillies, Jessop, and Lucey, forthcoming; Mauthner and Edwards, forthcoming). One of the challenges feminists face is how to create egalitarian and collaborative research practices and relationships, within the context of “new managerialist” hierarchical higher education institutions (Mauthner and Edwards, forthcoming). The personal, political, and ethical dilemmas that arise in negotiating the dynamic relations of power that structure and sustain the institutions and practices through which research knowledge is produced is becoming a key issue within feminist research debates.

## Reflexivity

The issue of reflexivity and the ways in which “our subjectivity becomes entangled in the lives of others” (Denzin 1997:27) has concerned sociologists, anthropologists, and cross-disciplinary feminist scholars for decades and philosophers for even longer (Kuhn 1962; Quine 1969; Rorty 1969). Feminist sociologists have been particularly vocal on this point, and reflexivity has come to be regarded as one of the pivotal themes in discussions of feminist research (DeVault 1996; Fonow and Cook 1991, 2005; Gelsthorpe 1990; Naples 2003; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). Most feminist researchers openly reflect on, acknowledge, and document their social location and the roles they play in co-creating data and in constructing knowledges (Harding 1993a; Hertz 1997; Wolf 1996). In this expanding area of scholarship, four key areas have attracted the attention and commitment of feminist researchers.

First, while reflexivity is largely a point of consensus for feminist researchers, recent attention has underlined theoretical diversity within the concept itself. Nancy Naples (2003:214), for example, argues for the use of the term “reflective practice” since it indicates a more thoughtful process and does not invoke the often-unconscious responses to stimuli associated with reflex.” Others have pointed to “strong” and “weak” reflexivity as ways of accounting for its varied degrees of reflexivity as well as its links to “strong” objectivity<sup>6</sup> (Harding 1993a, 1998; Wasserfall 1994). Reflexivity has also been linked to “accountability,” as a way of accounting for the knowledge produced (Code 1995; Doucet and Mauthner 2002; Hurtado 1996; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). Recent discussions have drawn attention to the constraints on reflexivity, owing to our partial awareness of the range of influences impacting on our research, and the unpredictable ways in which our work will be read (Bordo 1997; Grosz 1995; Mauthner and Doucet 2003; Mauthner, Parry, and Backett-Milburn 1998). We have suggested the notion of “reflexivity in retrospect” as a way of viewing research and the knowledge produced as a continuous and open-ended process that changes as researchers revisit their data and as new researchers reanalyze old data sets (Mauthner and Doucet 2003).

A second theme within feminist debates on reflexivity concerns the partial, provisional, and perspectival nature of knowledge claims. The production of theory is viewed as a social activity, which is culturally, socially, and historically embedded, thus resulting in “situated knowledges” (Haraway 1988). The “reflexive turn,” combined with the “extensive ‘turn to culture’ in feminism” (Barrett 1992:204), has, however, created a sense of uncertainty and crisis as increasingly complex questions are raised concerning the status, validity, basis, and authority of the author and their knowledge claims (Bordo 1997; Grosz 1995; Richardson 1988, 1997). This has particular implications for feminist emancipatory goals in that feminists

have been left to grapple with how to make “real” political claims from their work (e.g., Benhabib 1995; Lazreg 1994; Seller 1988; Smith 1999).

A third area where feminist sociologists have given significant attention concerns issues of reflexive positioning in research projects (see, e.g., Hertz 1997; Letherby 2002; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). This reflexive positioning tends to take the form of positioning in terms of subject positions such as gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and geographical location. This predominant approach to reflexivity has, however, been criticized. By focusing on the researcher’s own subject positions, the discussion of reflexivity tends to remain fixed at the level of the researcher and how their subjectivity—especially in fieldwork and in writing up—influences research. An illustration of this weakness is Shulamit Reinharz’s (1997) piece, “Who Am I,” in which she reflects on her “20 different selves” (p. 5) and their influence on the research process, particularly fieldwork. These reflections may be useful in underlining the complexity of “self” in practical terms during research, but their inadvertent consequence is that the researcher—the privileged, often white, often middle class, and First World researcher—takes center stage. While engaged in dialogues about decentering the West, feminist researchers from Western industrialized countries simultaneously put themselves at the center while marginalizing the Third World narrator (Hale 1991). A further critique is that naming subject positionings does not address the question of *how* these subject positionings affect knowledge construction. As Daphne Patai (1991) argues, these gestures at self-positioning are often “deployed as badges”; they are meant to represent “one’s respect to ‘difference’ but do not affect any aspect of the research or the interpretive text” (p. 149). While social locations are important, reflexivity also means *actively reflecting on* personal, interpersonal, institutional, pragmatic, emotional, theoretical, epistemological, and ontological influences on our research and interpretive processes. That is, how do these reflexive positionings actually shape research practices and the knowledges that are ultimately produced?

While feminist researchers have recognized that reflexivity is important in data analysis, and in knowledge construction more generally (Mason 2002; Olesen et al. 1994; Pidgeon and Henwood 1997), the question remains as to how researchers can “do” reflexivity within the context of empirical research practice, and particularly the analysis and interpretation of narratives. As well stated by Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002): “Feminism has been stronger on honourable intentions for accessing power relations than on effective skills and strategies to enable

researchers to overcome limits of understanding, and the difficulty of seeing ourselves as others see us” (p. 119).

## CONCLUSIONS

Over the past three decades, there have been multiple intersections between feminism and the fields of methodology and epistemology. While initially claiming a particular privileged place around the names of “feminist methods,” “feminist methodologies,” and “feminist epistemologies,” greater attention to diversity and complexity in feminist efforts to research and “know” the lives of others, whether across the globe or within one’s local community, has meant that feminists have come to see themselves, and be seen by others, as key contributors to these burgeoning bodies of scholarship. Feminist research has become a well-used term for the work that feminists do when they take on either qualitative or quantitative research that is driven by, and aimed toward, a desire to challenge multiple hierarchies of inequalities within social life. Feminist scholars have made significant contributions to both mainstream and alternative thinking around issues of power, knowing, representation, reflexivity, and legitimation in methodological and epistemological discussions. Feminist sociologists have been particularly prominent in their participation in advancing such knowledge.

While the rich multidisciplinary feminist scholarship on methodologies and epistemologies and the development of a specific field of scholarship under the name of “feminist research,” has been nothing short of overwhelming in the past few decades, several areas of work still require attention. Such areas include the challenges for feminists in making sense of, and theorizing, men’s experiences (Doucet 2004; Grenz 2005; Presser 2005; Taylor and Rupp 2005); grappling with power in the internal workings of the research process, especially hierarchies of inequalities within feminist research teams and collaborations (see Mauthner and Edwards, forthcoming); greater attention to linking “knowing and doing” (Letherby 2002) and methodologies and epistemologies (e.g., Code 1995; Holland and Ramazanoglu 1994; Maynard 1994; Naples 2003; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002); and actualizing what it means to “do” reflexivity, or to enact what Harding has called “strong reflexivity” (1993a) and “robust reflexivity” (1998). In the words of Lorraine Code, feminist researchers must continue in their efforts to reflect on and write about what it means to “know responsibly, to “know well” (see Code 1984, 1988, 1993, 1995) and to “create exemplary kinds of knowing” (Code 1993:39). Feminist sociologists are well positioned to lead such efforts.

## FEMINIST THEORIES

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What do we love most about sociology? Surely, it is that we can take her anywhere. Sociological theories, methods, and critiques make it possible to research virtually anything where social relationships occur, indeed wherever the fingerprint of human beings has touched—or damaged—the ecosphere. Yet its practitioners often forgo acknowledgment of sociology's own debts: sociology of knowledge, yes, but really only as a subdiscipline, not as a grounding for the whole enterprise. In some of sociology's guises, and certainly in the positivism that has predominated in American sociology, there is much to be gained by covering up the tracks: As a "science," sociology claims to have, as part of its birthright, the necessary arsenal for forwarding its knowledge claims. Disciplining the questions, insights, and critiques that come from elsewhere involves shaping them up, trimming their sails, and in short, making them "fit" the prevailing sociological discourses. Sociology stands as a thing apart, independent, robust, and versatile.

But of course, the innermost secret of the discipline is that its questions and critiques come from the outside, often in the form of critiques of the discipline itself. A focus on feminist theories provides a recent example of what happens when a discipline, imperialistic in intentions, finds itself not the subject but the object of another's gaze. In the 1960s, for the second time in the twentieth century, the feminist movement garnered adherents in every walk of life, some of whom turned their critical gaze on the academy, earned credentials, and became insider/outside *par excellence*. Sociology's science, they said, was nothing more—or less—than the commonsense sexist assumptions of its practitioners (Acker 1997;

Bernard 1998; Rege 2003).<sup>1</sup> Sociology, like every other societal arena, became not only an object of contested feminist critique but also a site of desire for transformation of the discipline and the entire social world.

### SOCIAL CONTEXT FOR SECOND-WAVE FEMINISM

The contemporary feminist challenge to the dominant social relations and ideology, and to their constituent forms of knowledge, resulted from a convergence of social processes that took off in the years following the World War II: First, the expansion of industry and government drew unprecedented numbers of women, including married women with children, into the labor market. Yet there was no accompanying development of social support for child care, no change in the sexual division of labor in the home, and no change in the dominant ideology that held that women were first and foremost mothers and that children needed full-time mothering. Second, the promise of equal education for boys and girls—the outcome of earlier feminist struggles—had not hindered either the development of a segregated work force or the perpetuation of radically unequal pay for comparable work. Third, the experiences of women in the civil rights movement, in the New Left, and in the anti-(Vietnam)war movement left them reeling from a clash between the rhetoric of equality and social justice and their actual experiences as secretaries, cooks, and bedmates to the male theoreticians and activists (Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail 1988; Echols 1989; Brownmiller 1999; Hamilton 2005:39–55). This

extraordinary convergence of broad macroeconomic processes, of a liberal education system, and of the protest movements of the 1960s affected thousands of (mostly young) women. Their mushrooming protest movement converged with a more institutionalized process through which women expanded their traditional organizations into pressure groups for legal and social reform. Contemporary Western feminist theories first developed within these social movements and then in virtually every academic discipline. The first practitioners were feminist activists, a few within the academy—some of whom entered graduate school and then the professoriate—in order to understand and change the world, including the scholarly canon.<sup>2</sup> As a result of these wide-ranging political and academic engagements, feminist theories offered no disciplinary allegiances. Philosophers, rhetoricians, literary critics, social scientists, psychoanalysts, biologists, and other scientists all engaged in their development<sup>3</sup> and borrowed freely from one other.

## OVERVIEW

In the succeeding decades, feminists have produced an enormous, diverse, and eclectic range of interpretations of how sexual hierarchies are created and sustained as well as strategies for confronting these hierarchies (Shanley and Narayan 1997:xxi). Taken together, these interpretations constitute an unprecedented historical challenge to the organization of social life and the ways in which that life has been apprehended. This challenge involves examining how sexual oppression informs and is informed by the many social practices through which people are privileged and disadvantaged, included and excluded, wield and submit to power. In its diversity, complexity, internal debates, and many languages, feminist literature defies summary. Yet all of it is provoked by unease and often outrage at current social arrangements, a multipronged drive seeking to transform social relationships on levels ranging from the intimate to the global.

From the late 1960s, feminist theories have questioned the assumptions, explanations, and silences in sociological theory, conceptual frameworks, and methodologies (Chanana 2003; Rege 2003). Feminist theories have also generated new areas of empirical research. In this process, existing theories were pried open and read for the spaces they could provide for feminist inquiry,<sup>4</sup> and writers previously excluded from the canon—Harriet Martineau is a leading example—were reread and declared sociological theorists (Hoecker-Drysdale 1991; McDonald 1994, 1998; Adams and Sydnie 2002; Rege 2003:12–13). Contemporary social thought—poststructuralism, postcolonial studies, queer theory, cultural studies, psychoanalysis, antiracist theory, and postmodernism—enabled and refashioned through feminism—all found sociologists who appropriated them for their intellectual projects. A voluminous literature resulted, and sociology underwent a metamorphosis

(Siltanen 2004).<sup>5</sup> But the extent of this sea change is not immediately obvious. Much sociological work appears untouched by feminist inquiry for whether as researchers and authors, editors (especially of main-stream journals), or instructors, the disciplinarians have worked to cover the traces of “outside” influences, normalizing feminist critique by tailoring it to fit existing discourses.

Feminist theories encompass a wide range of (often competitive) contributions that have developed rapidly, and that are undergoing continuing critique, and proliferation. They constitute moving targets, captured only uneasily, incompletely, and inevitably controversially. This essay provides an account of (1) the origins and development of feminist theories (Eisenstein 1984; Tong 1989; Jaggar and Rothenberg 1993; Hamilton 2005:9–38), (2) their challenge to sociology, (3) the contours of the various relationships between these theories and sociology, and (4) some of the key debates within contemporary feminist theory. For the most part, this essay only deals with the developments in Western feminist theory, and is thus a highly partial account. African-centered feminists, for example, have called for a halt on the one-way importation of theory, which in Obioma Nnaemka’s (2003) words, allows for “a localized construct to impose a universal validity and application” (p. 362). She urged an engagement with African feminist theory that builds on “whatever the people consider important to their lives, whatever they regard as an authentic expression of themselves.” “Western feminism,” she charges, is “caught up in its ambivalence: fighting for inclusion, it installs exclusions; advocating change, it resists change; laying claims to movement, it resists movement” (p. 363).

## SOME ORIGINS OF FEMINIST THEORIES

Examples of women railing against their status, critiquing dominant ideas about their sex, actively championing their virtues, and fighting their exclusions have been gleaned from histories dating back to the ancient world, and continuing through the ages. But a reasonable understanding of contemporary feminist thought may be achieved by beginning with the writing, following the French Revolution, of feminism’s most famous advocate, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) (Taylor 2003).

### Liberal Feminism

When Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792, she was in broad agreement with the liberal democratic slogan—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—of the French Revolution. She argued that women, like men, are rational beings with the potential to be fully responsible for their own lives. Although she wrote in scathing terms about men’s treatment of women, and provided them with reasoned arguments to treat women as their equals, she also lambasted aristocratic and

middle-class women for exchanging “health liberty and virtue” for food and clothing, that is, for a life of dependence on fathers and husbands (Wollstonecraft [1792] 1992:147).

During the next 200 years, with much ebb and flow, women struggled for the right to higher education, entrance into the professions, the right to own property and hold public office, and for suffrage, the right that came to symbolize full citizenship. For liberal feminists, the laws that decreed that women were lesser beings than men were a product of ignorance. The expectation was that as men and women educated themselves, these laws and the prejudices that underwrote them would gradually be overturned in favor of those extending equal opportunity to women. As Zillah Eisenstein (1981) has argued, the assumptions of liberal feminism became the new common sense understanding, at least in the West—for example, even the religious right does not campaign against suffrage. Today those sociologies that claim to be value-free tend to carry liberal feminist assumptions.

### Marxism and the Woman Question

Historically, liberal feminism and the Marxist perspective on the woman question share a time line throughout the nineteenth century. But they not only had different explanations for, and solutions to, the subordination of women but also occupied different, and sometimes hostile, political territory. Marxists accused feminists of being “bourgeois,” interested only in ensuring that women share in the privilege (or destitution) of their class. Feminists, for their part, often accused left-wing men and their political parties of being as disinterested, if not as hostile, as their class enemies in the rights of women.

From the perspective of feminists in the 1960s, it was Marx’s collaborator, Frederick Engels, who made the major contribution to understanding women’s historic subordination. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* [1884] (1948), he argued that early humans lived in a state of primitive communism: Everyone had to labor to survive and, therefore, all that was available was shared. With the invention of cultivation and animal husbandry, people created the possibility of accumulating surplus. This development was of monumental importance in human history, opening up the possibility of longer, more secure lives. But the underside was that this surplus could be controlled by some and used in the interests of the few against the many. Ever since, various private property regimes have codified these oppressive and exploitative social relationships. Those men with a surplus, Engels argued, wanted their own children to inherit the wealth they had amassed. But how would men know who were their own children? The solution historically and in most known cultures was to turn women themselves into property. If a man owned a woman, she would labor for him, and she would be permitted to have sexual relations only with him. All children born to a man’s wife would be,

legally speaking, his children, because he owned their mother; unmarried women would give birth to “illegitimate” children. This is the patriarchal basis of marriage, contested by feminists, gradually eroded in law, but retaining formidable social and legal underpinnings today.

In this interpretation, class society and male dominance entered onto the world stage together: for Engels [1884] (1948) these developments constituted the “world historic defeat of the female sex” (p. 57). It followed, then, that with the abolition of private property (under communism), women would be emancipated. Under capitalism, Engels detected a first step toward women’s emancipation, as economic desperation forced working-class women to become wage laborers, and hence propelled them into de facto equality with their husbands.

With the development of second-wave feminism in the late 1960s, Engels’s theory became subject to feminist critique: Notably, he failed to offer an explanation for why, after a promising start for sexual equality among our early ancestors, it was apparently so easy for men to take women as their property (Delmar 1976; Burstyn 1983; Barrett 1986) while his prediction about working-class marriage turned out to be, for the most part, a pipe dream. Feminists have been more inclined to believe that sexual inequality—in many forms, and some far more pronounced than others—predated class society and, if left to its own devices, would certainly outlive it, a position now supported by the histories of socialism in many countries.<sup>6</sup> Radical feminist sociologist Mary O’Brien (1981) argued that Engels should have looked more closely at the mode of reproduction, the consequences of men’s alienation from “their seed,” and hence from posterity and—what she argued was—their long compensatory patriarchal gesture to take control of women, their children, and everything else.

Second-wave feminism launched a critique not only of the public world but also of the private world—the world of family, love, sexuality, pregnancy, and child care. This feminism soon divided along political and theoretical lines into socialist feminism and radical feminism. A primary difference between them centered on the question of explanation: Who and what oppressed women—and why.

### Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminists argued, with Marxists, that the relations of capital, and therefore class relations, are pivotal for understanding women’s oppression. But they differed from Marxists in insisting that the oppressive relations between the sexes are not simply derivative of class, and hence would not disappear automatically with the overthrow of capitalism.

Socialist feminists analyzed the interconnections between the public sphere of capitalist and state relations and the private sphere of the family/household. On both a daily and generational level, they found, women contribute to the reproduction of labor power by having and rearing

children and by looking after husbands between their shifts in mines and factories (Secombe 1974; Hamilton 1978; Luxton 1980; Armstrong and Armstrong 1994, 2002; Luxton and Corman 2001; Vosko 2002). As a result, not only did capitalists and individual men benefit from the unpaid and personal service of women in the home but also, as feminist researchers discovered, they had helped create and naturalize the gendered distinction between private and public. During the rise of industrial capitalism, for example, men of capital, together with middle-class philanthropists and social reformers and the better-paid male skilled workers engaged in diverse, but mutually reinforcing, strategies to push women out of the labor force, a move legitimated through the promise of a family wage for male workers (Land 1980).

For women, the results of this long historical maneuver (reiterated today every time the media reports triumphantly on a well-paid powerful woman's withdrawal from the labor force in order to care for her children) were problematic. First, denied access to higher education and the professions, women were also pushed out of the better-paying jobs through various forms of "protective" legislation (Cohn 1985). Second, many men never earned a family wage but were nonetheless expected to support a wife and children. Women compensated for inadequate wages by increasing household labor, taking in boarders, doing laundry, caring for other people's children, putting the needs of others before their own (Bradbury 1993), and especially in the case of black women in the United States and Canada, securing paid domestic work in the homes of the affluent. Third, men earned the (main) wage, and this privilege reinforced their power over their wives and children. Men, exploited in the work force, often responded by flexing their muscles, literally and figuratively, at home.

Socialist feminists pointed to the final irony that when husbands or fathers died or deserted their families, women, encouraged from birth to believe that men would care for them and their children, had to earn a living in the capitalist marketplace with "one hand tied behind their back" (Liddington and Norris 1978). Most women had no marketable skills, were denied access to education and better-paying jobs, and had no social supports for child care. The family wage, portrayed as a form of security for working-class people, was unmasked as a fraud. This idea also served as a justification for women's sole responsibility for child care and housework, coupled with a lifetime of personal service to a particular man, an idea still underpinning much social policy and sanctified by many religious traditions.

### Radical Feminism

Radical feminists, meanwhile, argued that buried deeper in human society, both historically and psychically, were the relations of domination and subordination between the sexes. Shulamith Firestone (1970) located these differences between men and women in nature's unequal allotment of reproductive tasks. Women bore,

suckled, and raised children, while men had the time and opportunity to develop social institutions—including the family—through which they appropriated power and control over women and children. The bottom line was that men oppressed women. Overthrowing that oppression constituted the primary struggle in which feminists should engage. Radical feminists charted the path that brought male control of female sexuality—including marriage regime laws against birth control and abortion, and male violence against women into the mainstream of feminist theory and practice, as well as into the broad political and academic arenas. So overwhelming did the incidence of male violence appear, especially to many working in the shelter movement, that radical feminist interpretations veered close to genetic or biological explanations and suggested that men should be removed from child rearing, and women should separate themselves from men at least for the foreseeable future (Rudy 2001). More generally, feminists insisted that—while short-term relief in the form of safe houses and other support were vital—the systematic relationships of inequality between the sexes must be dismantled for the violence to end (Walker 1990).

The debates among liberal, socialist, and radical feminists animated social movements during the late 1960s and early 1970s even as challenges to all these perspectives came swiftly from lesbian and antiracist feminists among others. But it is fair to say that when feminists first began challenging the academy they came armed with various versions of these three theoretical explanations for male domination and female subordination and determined to transform these relations throughout the university and in all the disciplinary traditions.

### FEMINIST THEORY AND THE ACADEMY: FEMINIST PRECURSORS IN SOCIOLOGY

From the beginning of the 1970s, some feminists already in the academy, motivated by developing feminist theories and the women's movement more generally began offering explanations for how sociology had managed to "miss" gender inequality, or more precisely, in the case of Talcott Parsons, for example, had accepted this form of inequality as a solution rather than as a social problem.<sup>7</sup> At the age of 86, in "Some Reflections on the Feminist Scholarship in Sociology," sociologist Mirra Komarovsky (1991) reported that

feminists [had] made manifest a social problem that was invisible in mainstream sociology prior to the 1960s . . . neither the general sociology textbooks nor books on social problems or the family registered any concern with the "women's problem" before the rise of the new feminism in the 1960s. (P. 3).

Komarovsky (1991) was in an excellent position to know this; her career in American sociology spanned seven decades. One of the few "immediate precursors" of

the “new feminist scholarship” (pp. 5–10), she launched a counterattack on the post–World War II antifeminist scholarship in sociology (Talcott Parsons), psychoanalysis (Helene Deutsch), education (Lynn White), and elsewhere (pp. 8–9). In her research on Barnard coeds, she revealed the cultural contradictions for women who were receiving a broad education and were expected to become full-time wives and mothers, and argued that they were not “inescapable dilemmas of life” (p. 9). W. M. Kephart’s critique of her work represented the dominant reaction both inside and outside the discipline: “The women that Mirra Komarovsky has written about . . . seem to have little in common with the often-taunted, often-endearred, often-devoted women who comprise our wives, mothers, and daughters” (p. 9).

Kephart’s sentiment, shorn of its overt paternalism, was well represented in the discipline’s dominant perspective on the sociology of the family, the only area with a sustained focus on women. Predicated on an acceptance of the belief that men and women naturally occupied separate spheres—the woman in the family, the man in the world—this perspective emphasized the universal and functional nature of the family. At its most, banal functionalism degenerated into courses on marriage and the family, which attracted mainly female students hoping (in vain) for tips on their problematic task of attracting and keeping a husband, and male visitors for the film on childbirth. Discussion of family life lacked any discussion of sexuality (Wrong 1960). Nor was there consideration of violence, rape or sex under duress, child abuse, incest, or birth control and abortion. What William Goode (1963) called “the classical family of western nostalgia” minus a grandparent or two, and relocated from farms and villages to the suburbs, was alive and well in sociology classes right through the turbulent 1960s.

During these prefeminist decades, Komarovsky did not stand alone in her sociological critique of women’s position, but the list is short and includes Helen Hacker (1951), Viola Klein (1946), and Alva Myrdal (Myrdal and Klein 1956).<sup>8</sup> But few students found these authors on their reading lists, and if they had been there, most would have found them as outrageous as did their professors. A more glaring omission from academic curricula during these years was Simone de Beauvoir’s (1952) *The Second Sex*. This book, informed by existentialism, provided an interpretation and synthesis of women’s subordination throughout the ages and cross-culturally.

### Why Was Sociology Oblivious?

Several sociologists like Komarovsky whose work spanned “before” and “after” offered explanations of why sociologists, despite their declared mandate to research social inequality, remained impervious to the hierarchical social relationships between the sexes—and in many cases resistant even after the Women’s Movement was in full swing. Many point to “simple” sexism—the same garden

variety that permeated the rest of society. Make no mistake, Komarovsky (1905–1999) would have been very lonely and not just because of the critical response to her research. A Barnard professor advised her not to become a sociologist: “You are a woman, foreign born, and Jewish. I would recommend some other occupation” (cited in Rosenberg n.d.). Another feminist pioneer, Jessie Bernard (1903–1996), wrote that

sociology has kept the female world all but invisible because to recognize it in all its dimensions would be unpleasant if not actually painful. They would then have to see themselves as part of the oppression of the underdog. They would have met the enemy and learned that it was them. (1998:39–40)

Paramount among those already on faculty when second-wave feminism began was Dorothy Smith, who had earned her doctorate at Berkeley in 1963 and who taught at the University of British Columbia. Her work won her an international reputation; she is certainly the most widely cited feminist theorist writing as a sociologist. Her critique of the discipline that “had taught her to look at the everyday world, at home and family, from a standpoint within the gendered relations of ruling, in which women were other or object” (Smith 1987:8) resonated with many of her peers as well as with younger scholars. Smith’s method, honed over many years, begins “with women’s experience from women’s standpoint and [explores] how it is shaped in the extended relations of larger social and political relations” (p. 10). Drawing on ideas from Mead, Merleau-Ponty, Marx, and Garfinkel, she nonetheless declared that she was neither “a symbolic interactionist, phenomenologist, Marxist, nor ethnomethodologist” (p. 9). Her intertwining of indebtedness and innovation marks the work of many feminist theorists, both within and outside sociology.

During the 1970s, pressure from feminists resulted in issues dedicated to research on women/feminist sociology in major journals in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and elsewhere. In her introduction to the January 1973 issue of *American Journal of Sociology*, Joan Huber wrote that “those who are sympathetic to the women’s movement will be grateful to the [journal] for devoting an issue to reporting research about women” (p. 763). Huber provides both confirmation that feminist sociology owes its genesis to the women’s movement and signals the deference of the less powerful to the more powerful—unless her reference to gratitude was intended irony. Huber wrote, “The idea that American society is structured so that women encounter severe occupational discrimination brings forth reactions from male sociologists that are not theoretically disappointing” (p. 765). In 1975, the *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* dedicated an issue to feminist scholarship and according to the editor Frances Henry’s tactful introduction, the decision did not come easily. “The first formal sociological occasion in Britain which recognized gender roles as a

serous object of study” occurred in 1974 with The British Sociological Association’s conference, “Sexual Divisions and Society” (David 2003:65; see also Oakley 1979:1262). In the introduction to the subsequent books, the editors noted that “in so far as sexism constitutes unproblematic, commonsense behaviour in contemporary British culture, it should not surprise us that it appears thus in sociology” (cited in David 2003:65).

These comments suggest reasons for the resistance of the discipline’s gatekeepers to the emerging feminist sociology. Huber (1973) wrote that

although male sociologists have been sensitized to the social and psychological correlates of prejudice, their response to the idea that child care is a parental and societal responsibility to enable women to compete freely in the occupational world parallels the response of certain nonblack blue-collar workers who are afraid that they will suffer economically if discrimination against blacks should end. (P. 65)

Huber’s language is women’s movement language—not yet sanitized for a respectable academic journal, a sign of the overlap and mutual indebtedness of the two sites. Embedded in Huber’s prose is both the liberal feminist view that sexism can be overcome through changing laws and attitudes and a more pessimistic radical feminist view that men will try to hold onto power at all costs. This is the power that many feminists, especially in the 1970s, referred to as patriarchy (Fox 1986; Walby 1990). Cynthia Fuchs Epstein charged in 1981 that

the intellectual gatekeepers have chosen those ideas that support their own power and undermined women’s rights to challenge it. Even among those who argued for a value-free social science, many allowed their prejudices to blind them to the bias in their own experiments and observations. (P. 150)

Several scholars have explained sociology’s resistance to feminism and feminist theory with reference to its particular history and conceptual framework. First, feminist inquiry reactivated an old fault line in studies in human society, most famously encapsulated in Marx’s famous dictum “The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it” (Marx and Engels [1888] 1969:15). In the early 1950s, for example, “a group of rebels” split off from the American Sociological Society (ASS) to form the Society for the Study of Social Problems. In her account, Jessie Bernard (1973) recalled objections to ASS’s “lack of interest in social problems and issues . . . and its complacent acceptance of the increasing trend of putting sociological research at the service of business and industry” (p. 774).

Whatever differences exist among feminist scholars and their theories, theirs is a project of social transformation, and that places it outside the boundaries of much mainstream sociology.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, as Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne pointed out in their 1985 article “The Missing Revolution in Sociology,” feminism did not

receive a warm welcome from those sociologists whose disciplinary perspectives were also dedicated to social transformation—for the small matter of what required changing, and in what order, and how—remained, fueling resistance, controversy, denial, and appropriation without acknowledgment. Many Marxist sociologists resisted feminist analysis (Acker 1997), and some continue to argue, as do Beth Anne Shelton and Ben Agger (1993) that feminism is a “moment in a rejuvenated feminized Marxism” (p. 40).

Still, functionalism is the perspective most often identified in considering sociology’s resistance to feminism (Stacey and Thorne 1985:308). Although functionalism no longer dominates mainstream sociology, some of its concepts hold on tenaciously. The concept “sex roles” provides an excellent example. Talcott Parsons’s (1956) massively influential work on the family argued that social systems require the performance of complementary instrumental and expressive functions. Within the family, the father-husband played the instrumental role (he does things), the mother-wife the expressive role (she holds things together). When feminist thinking reached the academy, the concept of sex roles enjoyed the great advantage of actually acknowledging the social presence and importance of both men and women. From the late 1960s, with pressure from students and some professors for the inclusion of research on women, sex roles offered itself up as the most obvious and safest route. Most new courses carried the title “Sociology of Sex Roles,” and in these courses feminist sociologists began critiquing the content and differential valuing of male and female sex roles. Sex roles took on the burden of describing and explaining women and men’s work and social status. Sex roles worked well with the new feminist concept of gender. Many sociologists found this a useful concept, for it reinscribed the bifurcation of (biological) sex (considered not in their province) and (sociological) gender (clearly their mandate).<sup>10</sup> In mainstream sociological research, gender became invoked as a variable in countless studies. But many feminists believed that the concept of sex roles could not shake the idea of harmony and complementarity offering, as it did, no theoretical space for an analysis of power or hierarchy (Stacey and Thorne 1985:307; Rege 2003:28).

## SOCIOLOGY AND FEMINIST THEORIES

Broadly stated, five variations on the relationship between sociological theory and feminist theory—not all mutually exclusive—exist at this time. Reviewing these relationships provides a useful prelude to a discussion of some of the central developments that animate contemporary feminist theories, and why these developments continue to elicit a broad range of responses within sociology.

First, some sociologists remain opposed to the introduction of feminist thought, arguing that, lamentably, contemporary social theories, including feminism, have



eroded and fragmented a once unitary discipline: There had been a center and it did not hold (Eldridge et al. 2000:5; Stanley 2000; Rege 2003:18).

Second, several theorists have invoked feminist theories to critique existing sociological theories to render them more useful for explaining the social world (Sydie 1987; Chafetz 1997; Laslett and Thorne 1997:12). Theories that do not incorporate women's experience or gender relations as an active process, they argue, remain deficient. A variation on this response includes those who have taken up feminist theories and questions to make their own theory of choice more robust and inclusive (Wallace 1989; England 1993).

Third, some feminist theorists argue that feminist insights have enabled new developments in social theory but that these contributions have remained unacknowledged, or explicitly denied. In critiquing philosophical binaries such as male/female, mind/body and reason/emotion that had paraded as "truth" from at least the time of the Enlightenment, feminist thought presaged postmodernism's challenge to notions of universality and historical metanarratives (whether liberal notions of progress or Marxism's dialectical materialism). But as Meaghan Morris (1988) and others have argued, some (male) theorists not only fail to cite feminist theories but also express surprise that feminists have not made contributions to the development of postmodernism (Roseneil 1995:195–96). Another version of this phenomenon has been the tendency, as revealed in studies of citations, for (mostly female) feminist theorists to reference the mainstream (mostly male) theorists in their work without having the compliment returned (Stanley 2000:64; Delamont 2003:115–35).

Fourth, some feminist sociologists have reversed the question about the impact of feminism on sociology to point out the influence sociology could—and should—exert on feminism. Stevi Jackson (2000) has argued strongly that many of feminism's concepts—including social constructionism—derived from sociology, but have now been attributed to other disciplines, "thus obliterating sociology's contributions from the collective scholarly memory" (pp. 92–93). Primarily, she is concerned that feminism's embrace of the "cultural turn" serves to minimize the importance of material social inequalities, a development that would be countered by reintroducing sociological perspectives (see also Roseneil 1995:199–200).

Fifth—and this may be the dominant stance within sociology at the beginning of the twenty-first century—there are those who accede, implicitly or explicitly, to adding feminist theory to the "list" of legitimate sociological theories. This stance leaves scholars free to take feminist theories on board—or not. As a result, in British feminist sociologist Liz Stanley's (2000) words, feminist theory becomes (simply) "'another parallel project' [running] alongside mainstream theory" (p. 64). Critics of the "take it or leave it" position charge, in Dorothy Smith's (1996)

words, that sociological theory remains caught up with the "problematics of the past like the DNA of flies preserved in Amber" (p. 4). Along the same lines, Australian sociologist, Robert Connell (1997) (who led the development of feminist sociology in that country [Deacon 1997:169]) notes that "American sociology long ago found it could deflect critique by defining each criticism as a new speciality" (p. 163; see also Eldridge et al. 2000:4). So it has been with feminism. In her survey of world systems theory, Kathryn B. Ward (1993a) argued that "when theories continually fail to respond to feminist critiques, and thus to incorporate gender, race, and class at their centres, this omission results in theories that fail to fully capture the experiences of diverse groups of women and men" (p. 60).<sup>11</sup>

Feminists have offered two major reasons for this refusal. First, they observe that the interdisciplinary nature of feminist theory unsettles the sociological borders, and second, recent feminist theory threatens (deconstructs) the very categories that so much sociology takes as articles of faith (Laslett and Thorne 1997:15).

The resulting theoretical bifurcation—what Stacey and Thorne (1996) call "the continued absence of meaningful dialogue" between sociological and feminist theory (p. 3; see also Alway 1995)—finds its substantive equivalent in the way that sociology curricula divide the social world. For example, sociology departments offer courses on stratification, women or sex roles, and race and ethnic relations. When the theories informing these areas remain outside the "theoretical core," one can see the broader basis for the charge that "most theory sessions at mainstream meetings trundle down the old tracks" (Connell 1997:163). Meanwhile, feminist courses in sociology and elsewhere have become a prime location for addressing multiple and interlocking systems, including sexual, racialized, and class inequality.

These tensions within and between sociology and feminist theory can be elaborated by looking at some of the central issues and debates within contemporary feminist theories. These theories continue to be informed *inter alia* through developments in psychoanalytic theory, poststructuralism, queer theory, cultural studies, and new science studies. While some feminist sociologists participate in these developments, sociologists more generally seem to spurn or ignore them. Indeed, the lack of attention they receive in major main-stream journals stands in sharp contrast to their centrality in a proliferating range of interdisciplinary journals.

## CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST THEORETICAL DEBATES

Feminist theories have been the site of ongoing debates and challenges. Three major areas of particular importance to sociology may be identified. First, from the mid-1970s, feminists of color challenged the exclusionary nature of

feminist thought and its claim to speak for all women. Second, feminist poststructuralists, queer theorists, and feminist science scholars offered deconstructions of gender, the sex/gender binary, and sexuality. Third, feminist theorists have put their mind to the question of what happens to feminism when not only gender but also the male-female binary is destabilized.

### Antiracism and Intersectionality

For over a century, feminists argued that for women sex (or, for socialist feminists, sex together with class) constituted the most important and sustaining form of oppression and exploitation. Within dominant feminist discourses, this became self-evident, and much effort went into mapping the long and varied histories of patriarchal relationships. From the mid-1970s, women of color and aboriginal women began challenging publicly the universalism inherent in liberal, radical, and socialist feminism, all of which ignored—or at best sidelined—the histories of colonialism and imperialism, the legacies of slavery and genocide, and the systemic racism that produced lives of brutality and exclusion for some and lives of unearned and unrecognized privilege for others (Lorde 1984; hooks 1988; Collins 1990; Williams 1991; Brand 1994; Agnew 1996; Dua 1999; McKittrick 2006).

Theorizing racism as a system of power relations that legitimates differential and unequal treatment at institutional and personal levels illuminated the exclusions that white feminists installed within their theories and challenged the hegemonic narrative that second-wave feminism was a white middle-class affair (Baker 2004:7). By claiming to speak for all women (as universality implied), white feminists denied their social and economic advantages, reproduced racism within their theories, failed to make their movements relevant to women of color, and excluded myriad struggles against racism from the histories of feminism.

Feminist scholars began to join a new analysis of racism with the Marxist focus on class and the radical feminist focus on the sexual hierarchy under the rubric of what has been called intersectionality.<sup>12</sup> Such a perspective is prominently announced in the titles of books and courses—“Race, Class, and Gender” (Ward 1993b; Anderson and Collins 1995; Creese and Stasiulis 1996). The race-class-gender list, however, suggests the possibility of coherent theoretical perspectives that might limn the interconnections between these three dimensions of inequality, and yet this is no easy matter. Michèle Barrett (1988) has argued that “existing theories of social structure, already taxed by attempting to think about the interrelations of class and gender, have been quite unable to integrate a third axis of systemic inequality into their conceptual maps” (p. xii; see also Agnew 1996:3). Those in sympathy with this assessment tend to choose historically specific, theoretically informed local studies that allow for comparisons across time and space and that reveal the

complex subjectivities—their agency and resistance—of those whom they study (Adamson, Briskin, and McPhail 1988; Glenn 1997; Weber, Higginbotham, and Dill 1997).

Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), on the other hand, argues that Dorothy Smith’s “relations of ruling” concept “makes possible an analysis . . . of simultaneous and historicized exploitation of Third World women without suggesting . . . a geometric analysis of gender, race, sexuality and class” (p. 56). In line with this, some feminist sociologists—notably Patricia Hill Collins (1990)—seek an overarching theory that would attend to many systems of oppression and privilege, while Janet Chafetz (1997) anticipates that “theoretical progress on the topic of how various systems of inequality intersect could revolutionize the sociological study of stratification” (p.118).

### Challenging Gender and the Sex/Gender Binary

The challenge to gender-as-given occurred on many other fronts, including within (1) psychoanalytic theory, (2) poststructuralism, and (3) new science studies.

#### *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Psyche as Social*

After an inauspicious beginning, resulting from the misogyny of many of Freud’s statements, some feminists—Juliet Mitchell (1974), and notably among sociologists, Nancy Chodorow (1978)—began reworking psychoanalytic perspectives in order to explain how sex and gender identities become lodged so firmly in the psyche, and how and why women and men come to collude with the system of male dominance and female subordination, and thereby participate in its perpetuation.<sup>13</sup>

Feminist scholars take seriously the Freudian promise to explain how infants become gendered, how their sexual preference is shaped, and how they take their place within the hierarchical gendered order. What is particularly pertinent is how people come to feel themselves to be men or women as an intrinsic part of their being. This means that they are not just forced to be dominant or submissive, but that they are complicit in these relationships, as collaboration may be more comfortable than resistance (Benjamin 1988). Feminists have also reworked psychoanalysis to show that other forms of social inequality—especially class and racialized hierarchies—also become internalized and are therefore reproduced generationally (Spiller 1987; Abel 1990; Hamilton 1997).

#### *Poststructuralism*

Gender as a concept faces serious challenges especially in its use as a taken-for-granted variable synonymous with sex. Within feminist poststructuralism, the emphasis shifted to how gender—male/female, masculinity/femininity as well as the homosexuality/heterosexuality binary that is predicated on the gender binary—is made and unmade through “relational and thoroughly social processes”

(Marshall 2000:161). Historian Joan Scott (1988) and historical sociologist Denise Riley (1987) were among the first to develop a poststructural approach that displayed not only how gender was “constituted differently across historical and political contexts” (Marshall 2000:161), carrying shifting meanings, and differential access to everything from resources to influence but also that apparently neutral linguistic regimes, including taken-for-granted categories of social life such as revolution, work, bureaucracy, and charity were thoroughly infused and carried by gendered meanings. The earlier feminist emphasis on the oppressive aspects of femininity also gave way to the study of both femininity and masculinity as forms of subjectivity that shift in relation to each other and to changing cultural and political environments (Connell 2005).

In apprehending gender not as a category but as a process (gendering), feminist poststructuralists turned the core sociological concept “norm” from an assumption into a series of questions. Parsonian functionalism in particular explained social conduct both at the individual and institutional levels with reference to accepted norms—including fundamentally norms about male and female behavior. From a poststructuralist and Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective, Judith Butler (1993) posited that, when it comes to norms, there is no there there: that is normative behavior involves what she calls reiterations, and reiteration is always contingent, thereby creating space for altered meanings, including resistance.

Gendering happens through constant reiterative behavior whereby earlier reiterations are cited in support of present behavior, thoughts, and words and produce the materiality of the body. “Real men don’t . . . ; real women should.” All of this is not socially constructed once and for all but, rather, involves a contingent, fragmented set of processes that permit agency, social change, and resistance at each moment. We may feel ourselves to be male, female, masculine, feminine, gay, and straight in the depths of our being but the meaning of these concepts is neither unified nor unchanging.

Poststructuralism is indebted to theories about discourse and about how language works. Commonsense notions tend to hold that language is simply a tool for expressing an underlying reality. Words, however, do not simply describe or identify. Words make distinctions and create oppositions. In this way “we can only know what ‘man’ is through its opposition, ‘woman.’ The female is everything that is absent from the male and vice versa” (Hird 2002:23).

Any discourse makes some thought possible and others less possible or impossible. Contemporary feminists have drawn heavily on the work of Michel Foucault, who showed through several historically engaged genealogical studies how discourses “bring the true into existence” (Barrett 1991). Their work revealed that discourses are constituted not only through prevailing power relations—of class, race, sex, age, and sexuality among others—but also by a commonsense rationale for accepting those

power relations as given, that is naturalized, through reiterative practices (Butler 1993).

Within feminist theories, the categories of sex and gender have been thoroughly intertwined with critiques of sexuality within patriarchal societies. From the 1970s, radical feminists began to locate men’s power over women in their ability to control women sexually and to develop the institutions that ensure continuing control. Adrienne Rich (1980) coined the famous phrase *compulsory heterosexuality* to encapsulate the social and cultural imperatives that close off all sexual options for women except monogamous, heterosexual, coupling, usually called marriage. In a world of unequal power relations between men and women, compulsory heterosexuality ensures not only women’s sexual dependence on men but also their economic, social, and psychological dependence (“Resources for Feminist Research” 1990; Rudy 2001).

The concept of compulsory heterosexuality challenged normative notions of sexuality but left the category “woman” intact. Developments within poststructuralism—notably queer theory—undertook the deconstruction/destabilization of gender and sexual categories (Adams 1994). The founding principal for heterosexuality is, of course, the distinction between male and female. But as Judith Butler argues, this founding principal is simply sustained through reiteration (Hamilton 2005:173–74). In support of this contention, we note that, sociologically, the male-female binary that has been seen as so basic does not stand up well. The distinction has been challenged within social movements, and within the daily lives of many people who have developed new words and concepts to describe themselves: transgendered, transsexual—sometimes just “trans” (Hausman 2001:448). Some of these challenges appear to reinscribe sex categories as a kind of ontological truth, an essentialist version of what I “really” am. Yet the traffic between male and female destabilizes the categories, and some of the resulting challenges are pointedly aimed, in Suzanne Kessler’s (1998) words, at “giv[ing] up on gender” (p. 123) (Hird 2004).

Destabilizing gender categories attracted feminists for several reasons: First, this practice challenged the categories of the discourse that once left women invisible and the assumption that men and women were different, indeed, oppositional in their being and character. Second, it challenged the assumption that all women are in some sense the same because the category woman tended to collapse the differences among women that accrue from class, racism, heterosexism, imperialism, and even the idiosyncrasies of taste and talent. In this way, theoretical challenges of feminism from women of color, women with disabilities, lesbians, bisexuals, and older women to “historicize differences” appeared to converge with those of poststructuralism (Rege 2003:6). Third, the male/female binary dismisses evidence that intersexuals may account for as many as 4 percent of all births (Fausto Sterling 1993) and that in these cases, doctors decide whether to classify them as male or female. Taking this evidence

seriously led to renewed sociological interest in science studies.

### *New Science/Materialism Studies*

Medical practitioners in North America treat children born with ambiguous genitalia “in such a way that they conform as soon as possible to the two-sex model of sexual dimorphism.” While this occurs purportedly “to relieve the psychological trauma and suffering” (Anderson 1996:354), Sharon Elaine Preves’s (2000) recent research on the intersexed reveals that the nature of the interventions may be the cause of the greater trauma and that this drive to intervene mainly stems from the strong cultural belief that “all bodies should conform to the binary classification of male/female” (Anderson 1996:346). Yet this is a circular argument, as the belief in *social* difference impels us to ensure that all of us are male OR female. If one asks why is there a social difference between men and women, the answer is biology. In Myra Hird’s (2004) words, “Reliance upon a nebulous understanding of biology reifies a binary relationship between sex and gender such that explorations of gender are authorized upon the condition that ‘sex’ is left largely intact” (p. 2).

In addressing these issues, Hird (2004) repeats well-rehearsed critiques of sociobiology—namely, that it reads “backward” from the social to the “animal kingdom.” But by becoming science literate, she makes her own interpretation and concludes that sex differences in humans are hugely overdrawn. The animal and plant kingdom, as well as new scientific knowledge of genes and human cellular formation, reveal such enormous diversity to render the very notion of sex difference unhelpful—and wrong. “Whereas ‘the body’ is meant to signify nature, what is actually being analyzed are sites at which culture meets nature” (p. 7): “Bodies are important and certainly ‘material’ but not necessarily in ways that justify continued emphasis on ‘sexual difference’ (p. 148).

Sociologist Vicki Bell (1999) provides one route for rescuing the body from the oblivion that antiessentialism seems to invite, and argues for empirical studies that historicize the body, by taking people’s sense of embodiment seriously. The resulting narratives of embodiment would replace unwarranted assumptions of sexual difference while giving full scope to the centrality of the body for human subjectivity and social theory.

## **WHAT HAPPENS TO FEMINIST THOUGHT WITHOUT WOMEN AND MEN?**

Although recent theoretical developments informed by poststructuralism challenge the concept of identity, and therefore of woman, in ways that some fear shake the foundations of feminism and social movements, questions about what constitutes “woman” informs older perspectives as well. The category woman—what she is and what she

should do—lies at the heart of most feminist analysis, albeit in different ways (Marshall 2000:68). Liberal feminists, dating from Mary Wollstonecraft (who declared that she “earnestly wished to see the distinction of sex confounded” [cited in Taylor 2003:1]) argue that if women appeared less rational, less interested in the world, less given to philosophical thought and political activity, the explanation resided in the ways in which women were denied the opportunity for education.

Following Marx, socialist feminists argue that the consciousness of human beings reflects the activities in which they engage and the accompanying relationships they create. Women in different historical periods and different social classes not only differ from each other but also in some respects share more with the men of their time and station than they do with women in other social classes.

Some of the most trenchant criticisms of the assumption that there is a category called woman that may be used in theoretical discussions and political mobilization come from women of color in the West and women in non-Western societies. Their analyses expose the chasms between dominant ideologies about woman and the lives that women lead, the assumptions of white feminists about female exploitation and oppression, and the centrality of racism, imperialism, and cultural specificity in structuring people’s lives in ways that privilege them if they are “white” and disadvantage them if they are not.

With gender, race, class, sexuality, and other major dimensions of social difference acknowledged as inextricably—but always historically and culturally—interconnected, many feminists insist that gender should no longer be granted pride of place; indeed, that moment simply reflected the perspectives of white middle-class feminists who wrote and published second wave’s first articles and books. This revelation may also be stated as a key theoretical point in feminist theory; in Kum-Kum Bhavnani’s (1996) words, epistemology “demands discussions about what constitutes knowledge, and the role of the knower’s experience in that constitution” (p. 7).<sup>14</sup>

Some feminists express concern about the move away from gender, pointing to the cross-cultural evidence for women’s continued oppression and poverty both in the West and worldwide (Shahidian 1999:316). But as Cornelia Klinger (1998) argues, “What women have in common and what constitutes the basis of feminist theory and practice does not reside in a feminine identity” but, rather, results from “certain still-valid rules of how societies are constructed” (p. 341). Two examples suffice: First, feminist-inspired gains have not resulted in significant change to women’s preponderant responsibility for child care. The feminist demand for equality of access and treatment in the public sphere, though hardly realized, is a great success compared with the underlying requirements for changes in the social structuring of child care. As second-wave feminists argued, parents need 24-hour child care, maternity and parental leaves, shared parental responsibility, and a major transformation of the

workplace environment, which still assumes that men have a wife at home managing all domestic and childcare responsibilities.

In sociological terms, we haven't had cultural lag; rather, the social structure stayed still and the social actors (mainly mothers in the work force) simply had to find ways to manage. Miriam Johnson argues that this was Talcott Parsons's great insight—that women's widespread "emancipation" from the traditional domestic pattern would "only be possible with profound alterations in the structure of the family" (cited in Johnson 1989:105). Arlie Hochschild's (1990) *The Second Shift* resonated not only within the discipline but also as a more general social indictment of a global political economy and national policies that take no account of the needs of children or their caregivers (almost always mothers). All over the world, women are left with their children as men are forced to leave to find whatever work they can and, then, either do—or do not—share their wages with their families (Goebel 2005). Political scientist Janine Brodie (1994) refers to a "crisis in social reproduction" as mothers are expected to be at home with their children and in the work force at the same time, and with no social supports (pp. 57–58); in the United States Barbara Ehrenreich (1983) first revealed the chord of resentment toward wives and children by affluent men.

Second, as Klinger (1998) argues, globalization has produced a "drastic deterioration [of the] actual conditions and prospects of women all over the world" (p. 341). Robert Connell (2005) identifies the most influential movement on a world scale for defending gender inequality as

"contemporary neoliberalism—the political and cultural promotion of free-market principles and individualism and the rejection of state control" (p. 1815) (Reddock 1998:55). Feminist scholars in the developing world struggle against structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank that have eroded medical and health systems, deepened poverty and hastened global degradation. They challenge Western feminists to place global inequalities at the center of their theories, and to work worldwide against the policies of their own states and the powerful international bodies that represent them and not just for their own place within their own national boundaries.

"Gender is (still) used," as Klinger (1998) writes, "as a criterion for defining the division of labour in society, for excluding some and including others from different spheres, and for allocating 'potentials and resources of all kinds'" (p. 340) (Blumberg 1991). As long as all this is so—and only so long as it is so—her declaration that "feminism remains the theory designed to study these rules of construction and the women's movement is the practice designed to change them" (Klinger 1998:341) will resonate with most feminists. This is indeed the utopian appeal of feminism—a desire expressed in several recent works as "imagination" whether to evoke the destabilizing of boundaries between creative writing or fictional writing and knowledge and analysis (Barrett 1999; Bell 1999; Nnaemeka 2003) or to reinvent that precious disciplinary concept "the sociological imagination" (Jackson 2000:103).

## QUALITY-OF-LIFE RESEARCH

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As a fairly new interdisciplinary field of inquiry, the quality-of-life research has benefited greatly from the discipline of sociology. The field consists of five overlapping traditions: (1) social indicators research, (2) happiness studies, (3) gerontology of successful aging, (4) psychology of well-being, and (5) health-related quality-of-life research. The efforts of sociologists are particularly prominent in the first two of these traditions. Quality of life is also a major issue in the fields of the sociology of work and the sociology of the family.

Quality of life has always been a topic of interest in philosophy, where quality of life or the good life is viewed as a virtuous life. The philosophical approach is speculative and tends to be based on the philosopher's personal experiences in life. In the late twentieth century, however, quality of life became a topic of interest in the social sciences. Social scientists deal in a more empirical way with the subject and systematically gather data on the experiences of other people. In 1995, social scientific quality-of-life research became institutionalized with the founding of the International Society for Quality of Life Studies.

The theme of quality of life developed almost simultaneously in several fields of the social sciences. In sociology, quality of life was often an implicit theme in sociographic studies, such as the portraits of rural life in the United States conducted by Ogburn (1946). Quality of life became the main issue in the "social indicators research" that emerged in the 1960s as a reaction against the domination of economic indicators in the policy process. Initially, the emphasis was on "objective" indicators of well-being, such as poverty, sickness, and suicide; subjective indicators were added during the 1970s.

Landmark books in the latter tradition are *Social Indicators of Well-Being: Americans' Perceptions of Life Quality* by Andrews and Withey (1976) and *The Quality of American Life: Perceptions, Evaluations and Satisfaction* by Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1981). Perceived quality of life is now a central issue in social reports in most developed countries, and items on that matter are standard in periodical social surveys. Quality of life has also become an area of interest within the sociology of work, the sociology of housing, and family sociology (Ferriss 2004; Schuessler and Fisher 1985).

In psychology, the first quality-of-life studies were conducted as a part of research into "successful aging." A typical book of this kind is *Personal Adjustment in Old Age* by Cavan et al. (1949). In the 1960s, the topic also appeared in studies of mental health, such as *Americans View Their Mental Health: A Nationwide Interview Survey* by Gurin, Veroff, and Feld (1960) and the groundbreaking cross-national study on *The Pattern of Human Concerns* by Cantril (1965). Subjective quality of life is now a common issue in psychological research and is often referred to as "subjective well-being" (Diener et al. 1999).

In the 1980s, quality-of-life issues also began to appear in medical research with a focus on patient perceptions of their condition. Typically measured using standard questionnaires such as the Lancaster Quality-of-Life Inventory developed by Lehman (1988), this area of inquiry has focused on "health-related quality of life" and "patient-reported outcomes." Other medically related quality-of-life studies include residential care (e.g., Clark and Bowling 1990) and handicapped persons (e.g., Schalock 1997).

In the 1990s, quality of life also became an issue in economy. An early analyst in this area was Bernard VanPraag, who summarized much of his work in *Happiness Quantified: A Satisfaction Calculus Approach* (2004). Another recent account is *Happiness and Economics* by Bruno Frey and Alois Stutzer (2002).

## SOCIAL ROOTS

Quality-of-life research has its roots in several social developments. One such development is the rise in the material standard of living and a concomitant reduction in the occurrence of famine and physical illness. The more humans are free of these ills, the less evident ways for further improvement become, and hence scientific research on the matter becomes more in demand. Interest in quality of life was also stirred by the rise of individualism. The more choices are available, the more interested people become in quality-of-life issues and alternative ways of living. Ideologically, this orientation is manifested in a revival of utilitarian moral philosophy, in which happiness is the central goal (Bentham 1789).

When the postwar economic boom of the 1960s was followed by disenchantment with economic growth, a common slogan of that time was “more well-being rather than more wealth,” and this raised questions of what well-being actually is and how it can be furthered. This period of time also witnessed disenchantment with medical technology and a related call for more quality of life rather than mere extension of life. Much of this criticism was voiced by the patient organizations that developed around this time. Health-related quality-of-life research was also furthered by the movement toward “evidence-based” treatment in healthcare that began to come into force during the 1980s. Quality of life was soon seen as a relevant side effect of *cure* and as a major outcome of *care*. Consequently, quality of life became one of the indicators in systematic research into the effects of drugs and treatment protocols.

## CONCEPTS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

All social science deals with quality of life in some way. Sociological subjects such as income, power, and prestige can be seen as qualities, and this is also true for psychological subjects such as intelligence and mental health. The crux of quality-of-life research is its inclusiveness; quality-of-life research is not about specific qualities of life but about overall quality. The concept is typically used to strike a balance and designate the desired overall outcome of policies and programs (Schuessler and Fisher 1985:129).

In practice, the term *quality of life* is used for different notions of the good life. For the most part, quality of life denotes bunches of *qualities* of life, bunches that can be

ordered on the basis of two distinctions. The first distinction is between *opportunities* for a good life and the *outcomes* of life. This distinction is quite common in the field of public health research. Preconditions for good health, such as adequate nutrition and professional care, are seldom mixed up with health itself. A second difference is between *external* and *inner* qualities. In the first case, the quality is in the environment; in the latter, it is in the individual. This distinction is also quite common in public health. External pathogens are distinguished from inner afflictions. The combination of these two dichotomies yields a fourfold matrix, as shown in Scheme 7.1.

In the upper half of the scheme, we see next to the outer opportunities in one's environment, the inner capacities required to exploit these. The environmental conditions can be denoted by the term *livability* and the personal capacities by the term *life ability*. This difference is not new. In sociology, the distinction between “social capital” and “psychological capital” is sometimes used in this context, and in the psychology of stress the difference is labeled negatively in terms of “burden” and “bearing power.”

The lower half of the scheme is about the quality of life with respect to its outcomes. These outcomes can be judged by their value for one's environment and by their value for oneself. The external worth of a life is denoted by the term *utility of life*, the inner valuation of which is called *appreciation of life*.

### Livability of the Environment

The top left quadrant denotes the meaning of good living conditions, or “livability.” One can also speak of the “habitability” of an environment, though that term is also used for the quality of housing (Veenhoven 1996:7–9). Ecologists view livability in the natural environment and describe it in terms of pollution, global warming, and degradation of nature. Currently, livability is typically associated with environmental preservation. On the other hand, city planners see livability in the built environment and associate it with sewerage systems, traffic jams, and ghetto formation. Here, the good life is seen as a fruit of human intervention. In public health, all this is referred to as a “sane” environment.

Society is central in the sociological view. Firstly, livability is associated with the quality of society as a whole. Classic concepts of the “good society” stress material welfare and social equality, sometimes equating the concept

**Scheme 7.1** Four Qualities of Life

	<i>Outer Quality</i>	<i>Inner Quality</i>
<i>Life Chances</i>	Livability of the environment	Life ability of the person
<i>Life Results</i>	Utility of life	Enjoyment of life

more or less with the welfare state. Currently, communitarians emphasize close networks, strong norms, and active voluntary associations; the reverse of this livability concept is “social fragmentation.” Second, livability is seen in one’s position in society. For a long time, the emphasis was on the “underclass,” but currently, attention is shifting to “social exclusion.” In the latter view, quality of life is full participation in society.

### Life Ability of the Person

The concept of “life ability” denotes how well people are equipped to cope with the problems of life. The most common depiction of this aspect of quality of life is the absence of functional defects. This is “health” in the limited sense, sometimes referred to as “negative health.” In this context, doctors focus on unimpaired functioning of the body, while psychologists stress the absence of mental defects. This use of words presupposes a “normal” level of functioning. Good quality of life is the body and mind working as designed. This is the common meaning used in curative care.

Next to absence of disease is the excellence of function, or “positive health,” which is associated with energy and resilience. Psychological concepts of positive mental health also involve autonomy, reality control, creativity, and inner synergy of traits and strivings. This broader definition is the favorite of training professions and is central to the “positive psychology” movement.

### Utility of Life

The utility of life represents the notion that a good life must be good for something more than itself. When evaluating the external effects of a life, one can consider the utility of life functionality for the environment. In this context, doctors stress how essential a patient’s life is to his or her intimates. At a higher level, quality of life is seen in contributions to society, the contributions an individual can make to human culture. Moralists see quality in the preservation of the moral order and would deem the life of a saint to be better than that of a sinner. In this vein, the quality of a life is also linked to effects on the ecosystem. Ecologists see more quality in a life lived in a “sustainable” manner than in the life of a polluter. Gerson (1976:795) calls this the “transcendentalist” conception of quality of life.

### Enjoyment of Life

The final outcome of life for the individual is the subjective appreciation of life. This is the quality of life in the eye of the beholder, commonly referred to by terms such as *subjective well-being*, *life satisfaction*, and *happiness* in a limited sense of the word.

Humans are capable of evaluating their life in different ways. Like other higher animals, we have an ability to appraise our situation affectively. We feel good or bad

about particular things and our mood level signals overall adaptation. These affective appraisals are automatic, but unlike other animals, humans can reflect on this experience. Humans also have a sense of how they have felt in the past. Humans can judge life cognitively by comparing their experience with notions of how it should be.

## MEASURES OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality-of-life research is primarily about measurement. Hence, the field can be aptly described by the measures used, of which there are many. In the following sections, examples of measures used in quality-of-life research are presented. The substantive dimensions these measures are thought to represent will be brought to light using the Scheme 7.1 classification.

### Meanings in Multidimensional Measures of Quality of Life

Most of these measures are multidimensional and assess different qualities of life, which are aggregated in one “quality-of-life *score*.” Often, the different qualities are also presented separately in a “quality-of-life *profile*.” Multidimensional measures figure in medical quality-of-life research, gerontological research on “successful aging,” psychological “well-being” research, sociologically oriented research on individual “welfare,” and comparative studies on quality of life in nations.

#### *Example of a Medical Quality-of-Life Index*

One of the most common measures used in health-related quality-of-life research is the SF-36 Health Survey (Ware 1996). It is a questionnaire on topics on physical limitations in daily chores (10 items), physical limitations to work performance (4 items), bodily pain (2 items), perceived general health (6 items), vitality (4 items), physical and/or emotional limitations to social functioning (2 items), emotional limitations to work performance (3 items), self-characterizations as nervous (1 item), and

**Scheme 7.2** Meanings Measured by Ware’s SF-36 Health Survey

	<i>Outer Quality</i>	<i>Inner Quality</i>
<i>Life Chances</i>		No limitations to work and social functioning Not nervous Energetic General health good
<i>Life Results</i>		No pain No bad feelings Happy person



recent enjoyment of life (4 items). Scheme 7.2 shows how these topics fit the above classification of qualities of life. Most elements of this scale refer to performance potential and belong in the life-ability quadrant top right. This is not surprising, since the scale is aimed explicitly at health. Still, some of the items concern outcomes rather than potency, in particular the items on recent enjoyment of life (last on the list). As a proper health measure, the SF-36 does not involve outer qualities. So the left quadrants in Scheme 7.2 remain empty.

Several other medical measures of quality of life involve items about environmental conditions that belong in the livability quadrant. For instance, the Quality of Life Interview Schedule by Ouellette-Kuntz (1990) involves items such as availability of services for handicapped persons. In this supply-centered measure of the good life, life is better the more services are offered and the more greedily they are used. Likewise, the quality-of-life index for cancer patients (Spitzer et al. 1981) lists support by family and friends as a quality criterion. Some medical indexes also include outer effects that belong to the utility quadrant. Some typical items are continuation of work tasks and support provided to intimates and fellow patients.

#### *Example of a Sociological Welfare Index*

Similar indexes have been developed in sociology, mostly in the context of marketing research for the welfare state. One of the first attempts to chart quality of life in a general population was the made in the Scandinavian study of comparative welfare under the direction of Erik Allardt (1976). Welfare is measured using the following criteria: income, housing, political support, social relations, being irreplaceable, doing interesting things, health, education, and life satisfaction. Allardt classified these indicators using his, now classic, distinction between “having” (h), “loving” (l), and “being” (b). These indicators can also be ordered in the fourfold matrix shown in Scheme 7.3. Most of the scale items belong in the top left quadrant because they concern preconditions for a good life rather than good living as such and because these chances are in the environment rather than in the individual. This is the case with income, housing, political support, and social relations. Two further items also denote chances, but they are internal capabilities. These are the health factor and the level of education. These items are placed in the top right quadrant of personal life ability. The item “being irreplaceable” belongs in the utility bottom left quadrant. It denotes a value of life to others. The last two items belong in the enjoyment bottom right quadrant. “Doing interesting things” denotes appreciation of an aspect of life, while life satisfaction concerns appreciation of life as a whole.

#### *Example of an Index of Quality of Life in Nations*

In addition to the measures for comparing quality of life *within* nations, there are also multidimensional measures

**Scheme 7.3** Meanings Measured by Allardt’s Dimensions of Welfare: Having, Loving, and Being

	<i>Outer Quality</i>	<i>Inner Quality</i>
<i>Life Chances</i>	Income (h) Housing (h) Political support (h)	Health (h) Education (h)
	Social relations (l)	
<i>Life Results</i>	Being irreplaceable (b)	Doing interesting things (b) Life satisfaction (b)

for comparing quality of life *across* nations. These measures are typically meant as an alternative to the common economic metric for quality of life—that is, gross national product per head. They all offer something more but differ in the mix of additions. The most commonly used indicator in this field is the Human Development Index (HDI). This index was developed for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which describes the progress in all countries of the world in its annual *Human Development Reports* (UNDP 1990). The HDI is the major yardstick used in these reports. The basic variant of this measure involves three items: (1) material wealth, measured by buying power per head; (2) education, as measured by literacy and schooling; and (3) life expectancy at birth. Later variants of the HDI involve further items, such as gender equality, measured using the Gender Empowerment Index, which involves male-female ratios in literacy, school enrollment, and income. In a theoretical account of this measure, the UNDP states that the focus should be on how development enlarges people’s choice and, thereby, their chances for leading long, healthy, and creative lives (p. 9).

As shown in Scheme 7.4, this index covers three meanings. First, it is about living conditions: in the basic index material, affluence in society and in the variants, the degree of social equality. These items belong in the top left quadrant. Second, the HDI includes average educational level, which belongs in the top right quadrant. The item “life expectancy” is an outcome variable and belongs right below. The bottom left quadrant remains empty since the UNDP’s measure of development does not involve indicators of utility of life.

Extended variants in this family provide more illustration. For instance, Naroll’s (1984:73) Quality-of-Life

**Scheme 7.4** Meanings Measured by the UNDP’s Human Development Index

	<i>Outer Quality</i>	<i>Inner Quality</i>
<i>Life Chances</i>	Material wealth Gender equality Income equality	Education
<i>Life Results</i>		Life expectancy

Index includes contributions to science by the country, which fits the utility lower left quadrant. This index also includes mental health, which belongs in the life-ability quadrant, top right and suicide, which belongs in the bottom right quadrant.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses*

The power of these indexes is that they summarize the various qualities of life in one number, thereby allowing comparison with others and monitoring over time. Since most of these measures consist of subindexes, they also provide an overview of strong and weak points. Further, these indexes have public appeal; they list things that are typically valued.

Yet there are also weaknesses in this multidimensional measurement approach. One such limitation is that the lists of valued things are never complete but are restricted to a few measurable items. We may value true love and artistic innovations, but these dimensions are not to be captured in numbers. Furthermore, these lists of valued things are time bound and are therefore ill suited for extended periods of monitoring; they reflect how well we are doing with respect to yesterday's problems.

Typically, all items are treated alike, but the relative importance can differ. Differential weights are used in some cases, but the basis for this is typically weak and does not acknowledge that the importance of living conditions depends on life abilities.

A more basic problem is found in aggregation, in that one cannot meaningfully add environmental opportunities to individual life abilities. It is the *fit* of opportunities and abilities that counts for quality of life, not the *sum*. Likewise, it makes no sense to add chances for a good life (top quadrants) and outcomes of life (bottom quadrants), certainly not if one wants to identify the opportunities that are most critical. This lack of a clear meaning reduces the descriptive relevance of these measures and impedes explanation.

## Measures for Specific Qualities of Life

Next to these encompassing measures of quality of life, there are measures that are used to denote specific qualities. These indicators can also be mapped on the matrix. See Scheme 7.5. Again, some illustrative examples will suffice.

### *Measures of Livability*

Environmental life chances are measured in two ways: (1) by the possibilities embodied in the environment as a whole and (2) by relative access to these opportunities. The former measures concern the livability of societies, such as nations or cities. These indicators are typically used in developmental policy. The latter are about the relative advantage or deprivations of persons in these contexts and are rooted mostly in the politics of redistribution.

**Scheme 7.5** Measures for Specific Qualities of Life

	<i>Outer Quality</i>	<i>Inner Quality</i>
<i>Life Chances</i> indexes	Quality of society	Impairment
	Livability scores Position within society Deprivation indexes	Positive health inventories Capability tests Educational grades
<i>Life Results</i>	?	Satisfaction summations Self-ratings of happiness Happy life-years

Measures of livability of society focus on nations; an illustrative example is Estes's (1984) Index of Social Progress. This measure involves aspects such as wealth of the nation, peace with neighbors, internal stability, and democracy. There are similar measures for quality of life in cities and regions. There are also livability counts for institutions such as army bases, prisons, hospitals for the mentally ill, and residences for the elderly.

Measures of relative deprivation focus on differences among citizens with regard to, for instance, income, work, and social contacts. Differences in the command of these resources are typically interpreted as differential access to scarce resources. All these measures work with a points system and summate scores based on different criteria in some way.

These inventories have the same limitations as multidimensional measures of better quality of life, but one problem specific to the measurement of livability is in the implicit theories behind the measure. The ingredients of these indexes are things *believed* to add to the livability of the environment, but these beliefs are not necessarily rooted in knowledge of what people really need. In this respect, measures of the livability of the social environment differ from the indicators used for the physical environment. On the basis of much research, we can now estimate fairly well how certain pollutants will affect illness and longevity. However, a similar evidence base is largely lacking for the livability of social environments, leaving a vacuum that is typically filled with ideological prepossession. As a result, there is some circularity in the use of these measures; although they are meant to show policymakers the way to the good life, they draw heavily on what policymakers believe to be a good life.

### *Measures of Life Ability*

Different measures exist to assess "capabilities for living." First, there is a rich tradition of health measurement in the healing professions.

Measures of health are, for the greater part, measures of negative health. There are various inventories of afflictions

and functional limitations, several of which combine physical and mental impairment scores. Assessment is based on functional tests, expert ratings, and self-reports. There also are self-report inventories for positive health in the tradition of personality assessment (e.g., Ryff and Keyes 1995). This links up with a second tradition of capability measurement—that is, psychological “testing” for selection in education and at work.

As in the case of livability, these measures do not provide a complete estimate of life ability. Again, we meet the same fundamental limitations of completeness and aggregation. Unlike the case of livability, there is some validation testing in this field. Intelligence tests, in particular, are gauged by their predictive value for success at school and at work. Yet many of the other ability tests lack validation.

### *Measures for Utility of Life*

There are many criteria for evaluating the usefulness of a life, of which only a few can be quantified. When evaluating the utility of a person's life by the contribution that life makes to society, one aspect is good citizenship as measured by law abidance and voluntary work. Where the utility of a life is measured with its effect on the environment, consumption is a relevant aspect and there are several measures of “green living.” For some criteria, we have better information at the aggregate level. Wackernagel et al.'s (1999) ecological footprint measures how much land and water area is used to produce what we consume. Patent counts per country give an idea of the contribution to human progress and are part of Naroll's (1984) index.

### *Measures of Appreciation of Life*

Measurement of the subjective appraisal of life is relatively straightforward. Interviews are conducted through direct questioning, such as an interview or a questionnaire. Since the focus is on “how much” the respondent enjoys life rather than “why,” the qualitative interview method is limited in this field. Most assessments are self-reports in response to standard questions with fixed-response options.

Many of these measures concern specific appraisals, such as satisfaction with one's sex life or perceived meaning of life. As in the case of life chances, these aspects cannot be meaningfully added in a whole, because satisfactions cannot be assessed exhaustively and differ in significance. Yet humans are also capable of overall appraisals. As noted earlier, we can estimate how well we feel generally and report on that. So encompassing measurement is possible in this quality quadrant.

There are various ways to ask people how much they enjoy their life as a whole. One way is to ask them repeatedly how much they enjoy it right now and to average the responses. This is called “experience sampling.” This

method has many advantages, but it is expensive. The other way is to ask respondents to estimate how well they feel generally or to strike the balance of their life. This is common practice, and all the questions ever used for this purpose are stored in the *Item Bank* of the *World Database of Happiness*, a continuous register of scientific research on subjective enjoyment of life, kept at Erasmus University, Rotterdam in the Netherlands (<http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl>).

There are doubts about the value of these self-reports, in particular about interpretation of questions, honesty of answers, and interpersonal comparability. Empirical studies, however, show reasonable validity and reliability. There are also qualms about comparability of average responses across cultures; it is claimed that questions are differently understood and that response bias differs systematically in countries. These objections have also been checked empirically and appeared to carry no weight. This literature is aptly summarized in Diener et al. (1999) and Schyns (2003).

Questions on enjoyment of life typically concern the current time. Most questions refer to happiness “these days” or “over the last year.” Obviously, the good life requires more than this, hence happiness must also be assessed over longer periods. In several contexts, we must know happiness over a lifetime or, better, how long people live happily. At the individual level, it is mostly difficult to assess how long and happily people live, because we can know that only when they are dead; however, at the population level, the average number of years lived happily can be estimated by combining average happiness with life expectancy. For details of this method, see Veenhoven (1996).

The magnitude of insight these quality-of-life measures provide is somewhat difficult to assess, simply because they measure too many different aspects of life. However, happiness provides a fairly inclusive output measure, especially when combined with life expectancy in happy life-years (HLY). For this reason, the next section summarizes the main results obtained with this indicator of quality of life.

## **SOCIOLOGY OF HAPPINESS**

Sociologists have studied happiness at two levels, at the macro level for comparing across nations and at the micro level for identifying differences within nations.

### **Happiness and Society**

Comparative research on happiness started in the 1960s with Cantril's (1965) global study on “the pattern of human concern.” Happiness is now a common item in international survey programs such as the World Values Survey. The standard question on life satisfaction is as follows:

Taking all together, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you currently with your life as a whole?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dissatisfied									Satisfied

In the year 2005, comparable data were available for 90 nations. In the following, I offer some insights into what these data suggest about the quality of life in contemporary societies.

### *Level of Happiness in Nations*

Most research has focused on average happiness, finding sizable and consistent differences across nations (see Diener and Suh 2000). As shown in Table 7.1, average happiness is above neutral in most countries, meaning that great happiness for a great number is possible. However, for Russia and for most former Soviet states, the average score is less than 5. Average happiness is also low in several African countries.

There is a system in these differences. People live more happily in rich nations than in poor ones and happiness is also higher in nations characterized by rule of law, freedom, good governance, and modernity. However, happiness is not related to everything deemed desirable. Income inequality in nations appears to be unrelated to average happiness, though it does accompany some inequality of happiness, as shown for 90 nations in the 1990s and presented in Table 7.2.

There is considerable interrelation between the societal characteristics. The most affluent nations are also the freest and the most modern. It is therefore difficult to estimate the effect of each of these variables separately. The correlations are much abated when level of income is

controlled, and the correlation with social security turns negative. Still, with the exception of income inequality, sizable correlations remain. Whatever their relative contribution, these variables explain 83 percent of the differences in average happiness across nations.

Trend data on average happiness are available for the United States from 1945, for Japan from 1958, and for the first eight member states of the European Union (EU) from 1973. These data show that happiness rose somewhat in the United States and the EU but stagnated in Japan.

These findings do not fit the common theory that happiness depends on social comparison. Since people compare with compatriots in the first place, this would imply little difference across nations and no change over time. Nor do the findings fit the theory that happiness is a fixed mental trait; if so, there would not be such strong correlations with societal qualities or any change over time. The findings fit best with the livability theory of happiness, which holds that happiness depends on the gratification of innate human needs and that not all societies meet human needs equally well (Veenhoven 1995). Another noteworthy implication of the above findings is that modern society does not score as low in livability as much of problem-focused sociology suggests.

### *Inequality of Happiness in Nations*

These data can also be used for assessing inequality of quality of life among citizens, using the standard deviation.

The cross-national pattern of inequality of happiness resembles the pattern of differences in average happiness. Inequality of happiness is typically lower in the economically most developed nations of this time. Inequality is also lower in the freest nations and in the best-governed ones. Not surprisingly, inequality of happiness is higher in nations with relatively large income disparities.

Comparison over time shows a consistent decline in inequality of happiness in modern nations over the last decade. Inequality of happiness has declined even in Japan, where the average remained unchanged (Veenhoven 2005a). These findings contradict the common belief about new inequalities causing a growing split in modern society; rather, they suggest that the equalizing effects of modernization are still holding. The findings also show that inequality in quality of life is not merely a matter of distribution of scarce resources; it also depends on the general level of living and on freedom in society.

**Table 7.1** Happiness in Nations around 2000: Derived Indicators and Illustrative Scores

<i>Nation</i>	<i>Average Happiness (Mean on Scale 0–10)</i>	<i>Happy Life-Years (Life Expectancy Multiplied by Happiness)</i>	<i>Inequality (Standard-Deviation on Scale 0–10)</i>	<i>Inequality-Adjusted Happiness (0–100 Index)</i>
Switzerland	8.3	62.9	1.9	73
Sweden	7.9	58.9	2.0	69
United States	7.4	56.9	2.1	67
Argentina	7.0	49.6	2.5	60
Germany (W)	6.9	54.8	2.2	64
France	6.7	51.5	2.2	58
Philippines	6.3	43.7	2.7	54
Japan	6.1	49.6	2.1	55
Iran	5.9	41.5	2.7	51
Poland	5.8	42.8	2.8	50
India	4.6	42.8	2.8	48
Russia	4.1	35.7	2.7	35
Zimbabwe	3.3	12.5	3.1	23

SOURCE: World Database of Happiness, distributional findings in nations, Finding Reports 2005 ([www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap\\_nat/nat\\_fp.htm](http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/hap_nat/nat_fp.htm)).

**Table 7.2** Happiness and Society; 90 Nations in the Late 1990s

Condition in Nation	Correlation with			
	Average Happiness	Inequality of Happiness	Inequality-Adjusted Happiness	Happy Life-Years
<b>Wealth</b>				
• Purchasing power per head	+.67	−.64	+.68	+.78
<b>Security</b>				
• Lethal accidents	−.51	+.37	−.51	−.50
• Social security	+.31	−.51	+.32	+.55
<b>Freedom</b>				
• Economic freedom	+.59	−.48	+.61	+.64
• Political freedom	+.46	−.34	+.43	+.59
• Personal freedom	+.44	−.74	+.51	+.48
<b>Inequality</b>				
• Disparity in incomes	+.06	−.33	+.02	−.17
• Discrimination of women	−.45	+.38	−.48	−.76
<b>Brotherhood</b>				
• Tolerance	+.50	−.33	+.50	+.49
• Trust in people	+.37	−.50	+.54	+.39
• Voluntary work	+.04	+.22	−.00	−.11
<b>Justice</b>				
• Rule of law	+.53	−.57	+.56	+.68
• Respect of civil rights	+.56	−.44	+.54	+.61
• Corruption	−.60	+.65	−.63	−.74
<b>Explained variance (%)</b> adjusted $R^2$	83	71	85	87

SOURCE: World Database of Happiness, States of Nations ([www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/statnat/statnat\\_fp.htm](http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/statnat/statnat_fp.htm)).

### *Inequality-Adjusted Happiness in Nations*

The level and inequality of happiness in nations can be combined in an index of “inequality-adjusted happiness, which marries the utilitarian wish for greater happiness of a greater number with the egalitarian wish for fairness. The rank order of nations is again similar to that for average happiness, and the correlations with nation characteristics are also alike, which indicates that there is little conflict between utilitarian and egalitarian policies.

### *Happy Life-Years (HLYs)*

People prefer a long and happy life to a short but happy life, and hence the length of life is taken into account by adjusting life expectancy for average happiness. This is analogous to the computation of disability-adjusted life-years in international health statistics (World Health Organization 2001). The HLY is computed by multiplying life expectancy with happiness expressed on a 0–1 scale. For example, if in a country, average life expectancy is 60 and average happiness on a 0–10 scale is 6, HLY is  $60 \times 0.6 = 36$  years (Veenhoven 1996).

In Table 7.3, wide differences in HLY across nations are shown: almost 63 in Switzerland and less than 13 in Zimbabwe. The rank order is similar but not identical to average happiness. For instance, the Japanese are not too happy, but they live long and therefore rank higher on HLY than on happiness. The pattern of correlation with nation characteristics is also similar, but the explained variance of HLY is higher. HLY rose in all modern nations in the late twentieth century. Since 1973, Europeans have gained 4.3 HLY, the Japanese 4.4, and Americans 5.2. This means that the quality of life has improved in modern society, and this trend is likely to extend well into the twenty-first century (Veenhoven 2005b).

## **Happiness and Place in Society**

Sociological studies of happiness have focused on differences within societies, looking primarily for links between happiness and social position. As summarized in Table 7.1, in Western societies, happiness is moderately related to social rank; the correlations tend to be stronger in non-Western nations. Happiness is also related to social participation, and this relation seems to be universal. Being linked into a primary network appears to be most crucial to happiness, especially being married. This relation is universal, but the presence of offspring is unrelated to happiness, at least in contemporary Western nations.

Few data exist for assessing trends in these correlations over time. Some basic findings suggest that in the United States, people of African descent have become somewhat happier (Thomas and Hughes 1986) and that happiness has also risen among the elderly (Witt et al. 1979). But there have been no systematic studies on shifts in the social conditions for happiness.

## **PROSPECTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

The main objective of sociological quality-of-life research is to guide public policy. In this area, multidimensional indexes are useful only for informing policymakers about how they are doing. As noted above, these measures typically reflect the current political agenda, and thus the scores inform policymakers how they have advanced along a chosen way. Happiness research also provides information about the way to choose, at least if “greater happiness for a greater number” is a policy aim. The idea that happiness should be promoted is the core of “utilitarian” moral philosophy (Bentham 1789), and the application of this idea in public policy is known as “rule utilitarianism.” This

**Table 7.3** Happiness and Position in Society

	<i>Correlation (within Western Nations)</i>	<i>Similarity of Correlation (across All Nations)</i>
<b>Social Rank</b>		
• Income	+	–
• Education	±	–
• Occupational prestige	+	+
<b>Social Participation</b>		
• Employment	±	+
• Participation in associations	+	+
<b>Primary Network</b>		
• Spouse	++	+
• Children	0	?
• Friends	+	+
	++ = Strong positive + = Positive 0 = No relationship – = Negative ? = Not yet investigated	+ = Similar correlations ± = Varying – = Different correlations ? = No data

SOURCE: World Database of Happiness, correlational findings ([www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/cor\\_hap/cor\\_fp.htm](http://www.worlddatabaseofhappiness.eur.nl/cor_hap/cor_fp.htm)).

ideology is currently gaining ground, and consequently, there is a corresponding growth of interest in the implications of empirical research findings on happiness. For example, the British government commissioned research

by Donovan et al. (2003), and several more reviews have been published recently (Frey and Stutzer 2002; Layard 2005; Veenhoven 2004). Since the evidence base is expanding rapidly, this literature is likely to continue to develop in the twenty-first century.

Quality-of-life research can also be used to assist individuals to make informed choices in their private life, such as taking up an occupation, having children, and the appropriate time to retire. Prediction of how much satisfaction will be derived from behavioral options is not very exact; for this reason, we can profit from the documented experiences of others. Such information would be particularly useful in the contemporary “multiple-choice society,” but current quality-of-life research does not meet this demand very well. The focus is still very much on given conditions of life, such as social class and personality, and not on things one can choose, such as early retirement. Moreover, most of the current research is in the form of correlations and does not provide information about causal effects. Yet another problem is that there is

little specification by kinds of people, but this is required if one is to obtain tailored advice. This then defines yet another task for research on quality of life in the twenty-first century.

## VISUAL SOCIOLOGY

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Visual sociology employs images and other visual displays to analyze society and culture. As an emerging focus for study, it draws on two intellectual impulses that reflect a more general preoccupation with the visual. The first impulse is committed to using visual methods for research into human affairs and appeared roughly when Ph.D. programs in sociology were being established in America. The second impulse is concerned with the meanings of a culture's visual representations and has deeper roots in Western intellectual history.

Interest in developing visual methods for scientific research is almost as old as the camera itself. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anthropologists, physiologists, criminologists, eugenicists, and others had developed research agendas that used photography—and in some cases moving pictures—to produce evidentiary materials that were central to their arguments, whether as data or as illustrations. Sociologists, however, tended to use photographs and other visual displays more timidly and then only to illustrate an argument or to orient the reader to a topic under discussion (e.g., as maps and conceptual diagrams).

Professional sociology in the twentieth century developed its identity as a field of study by defining its subject matter as superorganic, consisting of elements and processes that could not be reduced to the biology or psychology of the individual. Contemporary researchers—such as Francis Galton, Edward Curtis, William Herbert Sheldon, and Cesare Lombroso, to mention a few—who used photographs as data, however, relied on somatic evidence for theories that social scientists succeeded in portraying as racist and social Darwinist. The photographs

they took were tainted as emblems of pseudoscience and inhibited sociologists from experimenting with more acceptable research applications of the medium. For all intents and purposes, sociologists did not seriously explore the use of photographic and other images in social research until the publication of Becker's (1974) influential essay "Photography and Sociology" (see also Becker 1986).

When visual sociology was first established in 1983 with the formation of the International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA), it was able to draw on a rich body of preexisting work in anthropology, psychology, proxemics, and documentary photography and film. Mead and Bateson's (1942) pioneering use of ethnographic film and photography in Bali (see also Mead and Macgregor 1951) and Collier and Collier's (1986) *Visual Anthropology* were especially important influences in the development of an empirical visual sociology.

The second impulse, an interest in visual representation and the interpretation of images, has been an abiding preoccupation of Western intellectuals since the Renaissance. Furthermore, art history and criticism has not only defined an ever-expanding canon of culturally resonant images—mostly in the form of painting and the plastic arts—but also nurtured numerous interpretative frameworks and methodologies, which continue to influence all who are interested in making sense of cultural products that are communicated visually. Sociological interest in interpreting the images produced by a culture has also been piqued by the growing cultural and social influence of the mass media on popular culture since the turn of the twentieth century. The mass media's presence in everyday life has

grown steadily, because each innovation has added to the total hours of the day that the population spends consuming its products.

Beginning with the work of neo-Marxists in the 1930s, sociology has been influenced by waves of critical conflict theory that have flowered into “postmodernism.” From this vantage point, Benjamin (1979), the Frankfurt School of sociology, Williams (1981), and Hall (Morley and Chen 1996) form a lineage culminating in the rise of cultural and visual studies (Elkins 2003). Barthes (1967, 1993) has been particularly influential in studying the visual products of a culture and argues that cultural products are best seen as systems of signs, whose core meanings are defined by their relationship to each other rather than to their referents. This assumption justifies applying insights and techniques derived from the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure to the analysis of nonlinguistic cultural realms. With the stroke of Barthes’s pen, therefore, it became possible to interpret images and visually perceptible aspects of material culture without recourse to the methodological constraints of empirical social science. The result is a tidal wave of scholarship on a wide range of topics. For the most part, this literature deals with social fractures such as race, class, and gender or politically and culturally contested issues such as homosexuality, body image, and stereotyping in various media and genres. Whether the focus is on the content of a set of images or how they are received by their audiences, these studies of feature films, popular television programs, collectibles—postcards, dolls, T-shirts, and so on—clothing styles, body decoration, home interiors, and myriad other representations in popular culture have become an abiding interest for many contemporary visual sociologists.

Visual sociologists interested in improving visual research methods and committed to broadening and strengthening empirical social science include Banks (2001), Chalfen (1987), Grady (1996), Harper (2000), Pauwels (2000), Prosser (1998), Rieger (1996), and Wagner (1979a). Those who mostly interpret visual representations are engaged with postmodern theory in the humanities, literature, the fine arts, and cultural studies. They include Chaplin (1994) and Pink (2001).

Each group, therefore, has a very different notion of where a more visual sociology should take the discipline as a whole: toward either a reinvigorated and more integrated social science or a new kind of culturological study of signs and representations unencumbered by disciplinary boundaries. It is important to acknowledge, however, that both these competing visions of visual sociology define images as concepts, or in Becker’s (1974) formulation, “For any picture, ask yourself what question or questions it might be answering?” (p. 4).

During the last decade and a half, numerous attempts have been made to define the conceptual structure and disciplinary boundaries of visual sociology. Emmison and Smith (2000), for example, argue that visual researchers should focus on enhancing observational skills. From their

perspective, the construction and interpretation of images, therefore, is a weak substitute for cultivating the neglected art of seeing. Most visual sociologists, however, consider working with images to be a necessary step to improving the craft of observation. Some visual sociologists believe that the field is an inventory of visual research techniques (Wagner 1979a), while others assert that visual sociology includes not only the ethnography of natural settings but also the semiotic (interpretative) analysis of the visual products of a culture and society (Harper 2000). Grady (1996) has argued that social and cultural research with visual materials should consist of many distinct analytic practices, only a few of which have been adequately explored. The most glaring omission in contemporary visual sociology, for example, is a lack of attention to the visual display of quantitative social information, such as maps, graphs, charts, and other forms of visualization (Grady 2006). In his view, visual sociology is as much quantitative as it is qualitative. Finally, Pauwels (2000) states that visual sociologists should develop “visual scientific literacy” to fully exploit the research opportunities that the wide range of visual materials and visual methods make possible. Becoming fluent in visual materials requires several competencies, including a detailed knowledge of how the materials were produced, the bodies of knowledge that study what the materials refer to, and the most accurate and effective ways to communicate visual materials.

Visual sociology today, therefore, is most accurately described—rather than defined—as a broad continuum of interests and applications premised on diverse theoretical foundations, a wide array of research programs, and a varied commitment to sociology as a discipline. In spite of these differences, there is consensus on three major propositions.

First, *images are iconic constructions*, which means that they are invariably framed representations of something meaningful that somebody created for some purpose at a particular point in time. Thus, not only do images have a history and a politics but also they often have a career, traveling from one context to another, with dramatically different meanings imputed to them on the way.

Second, *images contain both behavioral and symbolic information*. Thus, whereas all images are produced as acts of human subjectivity for purposes that may not be readily apparent, their very physicality ensures that what is represented is the objective product of a concrete act of representation. All photographs, for example, represent more or less clearly what was framed by the camera at the moment the picture was taken; they also identify the vantage point of the camera and, presumably, the photographer. While analysts may be interested either in the symbolic or behavioral information in the image, the act by which an image is created is one that is inherently both symbolic and behavioral. Indeed, images have often been tampered with to add, remove, or enhance information in the frame, which may be lauded as art or deplored



as disinformation. Nevertheless, changes of this sort are testimony to the lengths that the symbolic has to go to discipline the often stubbornly intractable physical grounding of the image.

Finally, *images are part of communication strategies*. They are usually used to tell, or inform, stories of one kind or another. In addition to the information that these stories convey, the images also have a rhetorical function that is inseparable from their truth values.

Thus, all visual sociologists agree that images constitute rich sources of information about quite varied aspects of social and cultural life and making use of them poses complex methodological and interpretative challenges to the researcher. This fluid consensus has resulted in lively debate, the development of innovative visual methods, interpretative techniques, and other applications that extract meaning from visual data.

More specifically, during the last quarter of a century visual sociology has

- made important contributions to field research;
- opened up new sources of primary data for social and cultural analysis;
- presented a compelling case for including the visual essay as a means of communicating scholarly findings;
- demonstrated that the new digital media provide invaluable opportunities for research, teaching, and communication; and
- explored how image-based research can strengthen applied initiatives in the social sciences.

## VISUAL FIELD RESEARCH

*Ethnography* has been an important part of sociology ever since the University of Chicago sent its graduate students out to explore the human ecologies of complex urban environments. Ethnographers document how people manage their lives in natural settings and identify the meanings that those situations, events, and places have for their participants. Immersion in the field encourages deeper insight into the dense textures of other people's lives. Photography and film strengthen the ethnographic project by freezing moments of perception, capturing what was in the frame for recall later. While the camera's frame is not unlike human vision, its focal range is far wider and includes far more details than even the best-trained eye can perceive. Collier and Collier (1986) were the first to point out how useful the camera is in providing overviews of settings, inventorying material culture, and documenting social interactions. They note, for example, that understanding how people actually use technology is a perennial challenge for ethnographers:

Using the camera with reasonable discipline the inexperienced fieldworker can record with accuracy the experience of a sawmill, even when he has a shallow grasp of what is going

on. Saturated recording, especially with the 35 mm camera, makes it possible to follow the technological sequence in great detail. On first examination these photographs may contain information too complex for a reasonable understanding, but they can be restudied later when the fieldworker is adequately oriented. (P. 66)

Harper (1986) relies on extensive photography to explore how the principal subject of *Working Knowledge*, Willy, actually does his work. Other ethnographic studies of work enable us to appreciate how important a "jack of all trades" mechanic like Willy is to a rural community with limited resources and income. But few studies show with such clarity and detail what people like him actually do that makes him so invaluable to his neighbors.

Since Harper incorporated photography into his doctoral dissertation of hoboos—subsequently published as *Good Company* (Harper 1982)—there has been a virtual explosion of visual ethnographies dealing with varied subjects. These include studies of neighborhoods in transition (Suchar 1993), the homeless (Southard 1997), farm families (Schwartz 1992), and the flow of commodities in a globalizing economy (Barndt 2002) to mention just a few. Brown's (2001) study of a female impersonator uses photographs to document each step of the process that "Jeremy" takes to transform him into his stage persona "Asia," while a study of a soccer league shows that

gender specific behavior was virtually non-existent when adults structured the children's activities through practice drills, team huddles and during active soccer "game time." However, it was very much present when children were given the time and space to structure their own activities. When left to their own devices—standing in line or during breaks—children separated themselves by gender, and boys and girls acted out different behaviors. (Stiebling 1999:142)

Older photographs can be used as historical materials to document social change, especially if the same scene can be *rephotographed* from a vantage point that approximates the original as closely as possible. Most such studies focus on physical settings and other aspects of material culture (Caufield 2001; Rieger 1996, 2003). But the technique is valuable for studying more intimate spheres as well. Nixon's (1999) continuing rephotography of his wife and her three sisters over a quarter of a century and Rogovin's (1994) chronicling of relationships over as many years yield deeply evocative portraits that link aging to other aspects of change.

In addition to using photographs to document behavior and culture, many ethnographers find that discussing photographs with a subject elicits invaluable information that might not otherwise emerge in an interview. *Photo-elicitation*, as this research technique has come to be called, can be used with photographs produced by either the researcher or others, including the subject. The line of questioning can be *closed ended* and identify people,

places, things, and processes in the image or it can be *open ended* and serve to jog memory or as a projective technique, eliciting what a respondent values in the image (Harper 2002). Researchers report that photo-elicitation is an effective icebreaker and usually opens up floodgates of information. How much is due to the content of the image itself or to the fact that researchers and subjects usually sit side by side as they view the images, discussing them in a relaxed and conversational fashion while avoiding eye contact, is still an open question.

Notable studies using photo-elicitation include Brown (2001), Stiebling (1999), and Harper (1986). The subjects explored in photo-elicitation studies are quite varied and encompass, for example, perceptions of community (Does et al. 1992), views of the landscape (Beilin 2005), and reading magazine advertisements (Craig, Kretsedemas, and Gryniowski 1997). Gold (1991), in his study of ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese immigrants from Vietnam, found remarkable agreement between both groups on the visual markers that distinguish them. In addition,

while the older generation . . . discusses ethnic differences with apparently little conscious reflection, the younger refugees appeared to “piece together” their interpretations. Their difficulty in “reading” photos for ethnic cues seems to substantiate the older refugees’ assertion that ethnic boundaries are dissolving in America. (P. 21)

One of the legacies to visual sociology from anthropologists and others is *subject-generated imagery* (Chalfen 1997:290). In this type of research, recording devices are turned over to subjects. Examples include drawings by children (Coles 1992), their photographs (Ewald 1985), or more ambitious attempts to represent indigenous meanings in different cultures (Worth and Adair 1997). In some cases, the purpose is merely to record whatever captures a subject’s attention; in others, to explore a subject’s perception or experience of a topic of mutual interest. Rich and Chalfen’s (1999) description of why asthmatic patients were given video cameras serves as a template for articulating the goals underlying most projects that use subject-generated imagery:

By giving young people a voice in describing their disease and asking them to “teach us about your asthma,” we anticipated that they could help clinicians better understand the worlds in which they live with and care for their illness. We wanted to learn more about how asthma was experienced at home, at school, and at play as part of their daily lives. We wanted to see how they managed the routines of asthma management, responded to asthma emergencies, and how the relationships they had with family and friends might be significant to the illness and its management. We wished to hear how they understood their disease, the particular beliefs they had about asthma, and details of their emotional involvement with this illness. In short, what social, cultural, and/or psychological issues of living with asthma might have been overlooked through previous studies? (P. 52)

## NEW SOURCES OF PRIMARY DATA

Sociologists often use archives and repositories of official records as sources of information. But, unlike documentarians and historians, they usually neglect visual materials. In recent years, however, visual sociologists have made extensive use of various collections of photographs and other visual documents. As it turns out there are many of these visual records because, since the first appearance of the camera, individuals, families, informal groups, voluntary associations, and more formal organizations have documented their existence and their activities. The visual materials so produced end up in family albums, shoeboxes, desk drawers, stuffed in cardboard boxes in storerooms, in catalogs, yearbooks, and in official archives of one sort or another. In addition, popular culture has created a vast market for postcards, greeting cards, and myriad other ways of creating visual memorabilia that people use to remember an event, a moment, or a person. Visual sociologists are exploring the research potential of such materials and have discovered just how much of this material exists and how varied it is.

Completed studies include the photographic archives of schools (Margolis 1999, 2004), coal camps (Margolis 1994), churches (Caulfield 2001), newspapers, and family albums (Schwartzberg 2005). Chalfen discovered rich materials in Japanese visual culture, including pet cemeteries and home memorials (Chalfen 2003) as well as print clubs (Chalfen 2001). Some of the more unusual repositories of information are found in attics and flea markets. Bogdan and Marshall (1997) and Mellinger (1992), for example, use postcards collected in such “archives” to study, respectively, past attitudes toward mental illness and African Americans.

Social scientists who use these materials, however, are careful to determine what they might be evidence “of.” Nordstrom (1992) has shown that ideological/aesthetic notions of what the editors and photographers thought Samoans should look like shaped depictions of Samoans in National Geographic. Hagaman (1993) continues this train of thought as follows:

Newspaper sports feature photographs are highly conventionalized and stereotyped images made by photographers using a limited visual vocabulary to tell a limited number of “stories” . . . These photographs are preconceptualized, that is, they embody ideas about the nature of sports developed prior to experience in the situation being photographed. The limited visual vocabulary being used severely constrains the kinds of ideas and relationships the photographs can communicate . . . The virtuosity of newspaper photographers consists in their ability to make a better version of a photograph from the standard repertoire of already known images. (P. 65)

To the extent that photographs, or visual records generally, are posed or illustrate the poses that people use to manage impressions that others might have of them, then

it is possible that what they contain is information not so much about actuality but rather about what people expect that the world and its relationships *should* look like.

One archive that sociologists have studied in some depth is mass culture. Do advertising images, feature films, and television shows reflect behavior or are they self-interested guides to conduct? Goffman (1979) addresses this issue in *Gender Advertisements* by underscoring continuity between the fantasy worlds of advertising and behavior, between our ideals and our conduct:

The magical ability of the advertiser to use a few models and props to evoke a life-like scene of his own choosing is not primarily due to the art and technology of commercial photography; it is due primarily to those institutionalized arrangements in social life which allow strangers to glimpse the lives of persons they pass, and to the readiness of all of us to switch at any moment from dealing with the real world to participating in make-believe ones. (P. 23)

It may well be that media representations are documents that trace the links between how we idealize our lives and actually conduct them and that different media provide insight into some dimensions of social and cultural life and not others. Print advertisements, for example, toy with behavioral norms, while television advertising has more room for irony in celebrating or questioning those norms. Feature films not only reproduce the normative order in an even more complex and nuanced form but also permit audiences, as well as social researchers, to explore modalities of style or the possible ways that subjects orient themselves to—as well as manage—the normative order (Fowles 1996). If Goffman is correct that popular media reflects not so much a society as people's engagement with that society, then the various streams of popular culture might be read most profitably as different reflections of those emotional investments.

## THE VISUAL ESSAY

Documentary photography and film have inspired a growing number of social scientists to expand the storytelling conventions that frame how they conduct social research and report it. This narrative turn tries to make social facts come alive in portraits of real people in real places and concrete situations living, and talking about, their lives. Nevertheless, the capacity of documentary images to dramatically reveal the “felt lives” of situated experience raises concerns that compelling narratives may compromise social scientists' commitment to developing theory based on valid and representative data. This issue has been addressed by visual anthropologists who have argued that ethnographic film should be distinguished from other documentary genres by framing a film theoretically, exposing the role played by the filmmaker in the making of the film, and developing a shooting strategy that includes as much

social and cultural context as possible. Wagner (2004), however, has argued that social science would be better served by highlighting what the two fields have in common:

Documentary photography and visual social research are distinguished not so much by different logics of inquiry as by contrasting social conventions for addressing three key challenges: creating empirically credible images of culture and social life, framing empirical observations to highlight new knowledge, and challenging existing social theory. (P. 1478)

Visual sociologists are more sanguine about cross-fertilization between documentary and social research in part because their own work is mostly photographic and documentary. Photographers generally publish their photographs with an accompanying text that establishes contexts missing from the images themselves while also framing how the narrative might have meanings broader than the lives of the subjects depicted in the documentary. It is also important to acknowledge, however, that documentary film has developed numerous conventions for providing missing context. These include narration, voice-overs, establishing shots, and using documentary materials such as photographs, home movies, letters, archival documents, ambient sound, and so on. Documentary filmmakers, unlike photographers, often write comprehensive study guides to accompany the viewing of their films.

Currently, several trends make working in documentary film increasingly attractive to social scientists. First, with digital video and desktop editing, it is technically possible to create broadcast-quality films at low cost. Second, widespread interest in looser and more subjective narrative forms has gained a growing number of adherents within sociology (Berger and Quinney 2005). Finally, social scientists realize that the commitment to developing comprehensive explanations of social and cultural behavior is a collaborative enterprise invariably based on integrating many investigations that are inevitably partial in scope and in method. Documentary film and the photo essay, thus, are arrows in a social scientist's quiver (Grady 1991).

Visual sociologists increasingly use documentary narrative conventions in photo essays and films that successfully respond to the three challenges to logical inquiry identified by Wagner. Greenblat's (2004) study of Alzheimer patients in California produces “empirically credible images of culture and social life” (Wagner 2004:1478) that seamlessly fuse documentary technique and sociological analysis. Stehle's (1985) portraits of the intimate relationships between patients at the Philadelphia Home for Incurables certainly frame “empirical observations to highlight new knowledge” (Wagner 2004:1478), in this case, how love is cultivated within the confines of a total institution.

James Ault's (1987) *Born Again* and David Redmon's (2005) *Mardi Gras* are films that address contentious debates in “existing social theory” (Wagner 2004:1478).

*Born Again* explores how fundamentalist Christians in a small church in Worcester, Massachusetts, rely on their faith to address many of the moral challenges of contemporary society. *Mardi Gras* shuttles between the festival in New Orleans and a factory in China, where the beads that are tossed from the floats and highly prized by revelers are manufactured. The sociological study of the social basis and consequences of religious mobilization (*Born Again*) and the impact of globalization (*Mardi Gras*) inform the films' treatment of their subjects. Both films introduce viewers to characters whose lives are richer than a concatenation of their social roles.

## MULTIMEDIA RESEARCH AND REPORTING IN A DIGITAL AGE

High-power minicomputers with memory storage capabilities that grow exponentially; sophisticated and powerful software programs performing bewildering arrays of functions for entering, manipulating, analyzing, and communicating images, numerical data, and text; a World Wide Web linking anyone with a connection to vast storehouses of information, expanding at an astonishing rate: All of these are aspects of the digitization of information as it transforms the work place of the social scientist.

Research can be done digitally, on or off the Web. The Web is a vast bazaar of retailers, fan clubs, family gatherings, and porn sites—to mention some of the most popular venues—which are connected to other sites by explicit links or the insatiable appetite of browsers to devour whatever their search engines might ensnare. Nevertheless, while

the Web forms both a unique subject and tool for cultural research . . . serious methodological problems still need to be overcome before these promising prospects can be realized to their full extent. These problems have to do with getting to know the Web population, and how they relate to the rest of the off-line world, and with developing adequate research tools to disclose the varied verbal and visual nature of the Web. (Pauwels 2005:613)

In any event, cameras, minidisk recorders, handheld global positioning system receivers, eye-tracking machines, and many other emerging technologies are giving birth to vast amounts of data as images, sounds, and coordinates of one kind or another. In addition, between conception and hardcopy, this data mostly lives out its life in one region of cyberspace or another, where it congregates in myriad assemblages. Currently, much of what visual sociologists do with this capacity is exploratory and fragmentary. Web sites come and go, some databases are on the Web and available to anybody, while others are either lodged on university servers with restricted access or may be distributed informally on a CD or DVD format. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the digital revolution has not only expanded the types and amounts of information

that can be analyzed but it also makes it possible for scholars to communicate in unprecedented ways (Harper 2004).

Libraries, museums, individuals, trade agencies, and businesses are making available voluminous archives of photographs and other still and moving images that are useful for teaching and research (see Wagner's compilation of valuable Web sites: <http://education.ucdavis.edu/~wagner/vdrLinks.html>). Among sociologists, Latour (1998; [www.ensmp.fr/~latour/virtual/](http://www.ensmp.fr/~latour/virtual/)) and Hagaman (2002) have used the Web and a CD format to navigate through complex social networks or intimately personal worlds. Latour uses a "pathway—network—module" model to trace the central processes and sites that constitute the physical infrastructure of Paris. Latour takes the reader/viewer on a tour that links the taken-for-granted visible processes and exchanges of daily life (i.e., an anonymous city worker repairing a street sign) to the invisible command posts that direct and monitor these processes (i.e., control centers in traffic, public works, water and sewer departments). Latour's narrative consists of meditations explicating the significance of the images he displays. He has developed a format suited to an investigation of physical infrastructures that establishes them as a basis not only for studying urban areas but also to redefine sociological theory.

Hagaman's (2002) *Howie Feeds Me* is composed of 14 "sonnets"—sets of linked photographs—documenting the spaces, locales, and associations that constitute the material infrastructure of her relationship with her partner. Steiger (2000) uses 80 photographs to document the human experience of one of the networks that Latour (1998) explores in *Paris: Invisible City*: a commuter train ride between Basel and Zurich. *Visual Sociology*, which published her study, also distributed a CD that presented the images as a timed slide show.

More interactive applications of digital technology encourage users to develop, and test, their own ideas about the material. Biella, Chagnon, and Seaman's (1997) *Yanomamo Interactive* enables users to

play the film backwards and forwards and, focusing on specific individuals in the event, develop their own hypotheses and arguments about this seemingly chaotic but ultimately highly structured event—an ax fight. ([www.anth.ucsb.edu/projects/axfight/](http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/projects/axfight/))

Grady (1999) has created numerous databases for use in the classroom. These include an interactive FilemakerPro database that enables students to identify and archive images to test Goffman's (1979) propositions in *Gender Advertisements* about the norms regulating gender displays. Grady has also compiled a database of every advertisement with a representation of an African American, which appeared in *LIFE* magazine from 1936 to 2000. This database is used by students to study social changes in how race relations are displayed and as a sampling frame for studies of gender and social class representations (Grady 2003). Finally, researchers increasingly use the

Web as a research site for interviewing or surveying respondents. Needless to say, questionnaire surveys conducted on the Web can be designed to contain visual materials for elicitation or other purposes.

Some of the world's most reliable quantitative databases are now online with varying degrees of interactivity. These include the U.S. Census Bureau, the United Nations, and myriad other agencies, which contain numerous social indicators at various levels of aggregation. The *University of California Atlas of Global Inequality* (<http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/query.php>) is a compendium of international statistics compiled from various agencies. Also, many Web sites have installed functions to display the data in chart and graph forms. The Census Bureau's American Factfinder Web site ([http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en)), for example, lets online consumers design their own maps. The screen shot function on most computers is an easy way to copy charts and maps for insertion into a word-processing document. Moreover, quantitative databases often provide comma-separated tables that can be pasted to spreadsheet programs where they can be turned into various kinds of graphs with the chart-making functions found on most spreadsheet programs. Finally, the General Social Survey, which has been conducted since 1972, can be accessed by very user-friendly software (Survey Documentation and Analysis) designed by the Computer-Assisted Survey Methods Program at the University of California, Berkeley (<http://sda.berkeley.edu:7502/index.htm>).

One of the most important consequences of the increased availability of social indicators and other statistics on the Web is that they can be displayed in the classroom. The teacher, therefore, is able to visualize data—whether in tabular or chart form—and so enlist both the adapted competency of the eye for pattern recognition and the possibility of engaging students in hypothesis testing with quantitative data.

## APPLIED VISUAL SOCIOLOGY

Applied social science uses research and analysis to help institutions function more effectively or to document why and how an institution should be transformed if not eliminated. Images have a long history of being deployed to build popular support for policy initiatives by established authorities or for social reform movements contesting such authorities. Films and photographs produced under these auspices are usually propaganda, no matter how beautiful or accurate the information in the finished product might be. There is no necessary connection, however, between using images for political purposes and any political party, tendency, or ideology. Nevertheless, the most influential images in twentieth-century American propaganda have been produced by those affiliated with the political left and its reform agendas. Not surprisingly, much applied visual sociology has advocated for reform or more radical social

change. Nevertheless, since its inception as a field, there has been a growing concern within visual sociology that applied work be conducted rigorously and that it be of use to those who variously make, implement, or consume policy (the public). Managing the tensions between policy and science, advocacy and analysis, and providers and clients is as much a challenge in applied visual sociology as it is in other fields.

Many of the sociologists who formed the IVSA were amateur photographers who fell in love with the expressive potential of the medium. They saw themselves as spiritual heirs of documentarians such as Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, and Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and others who had been organized by Roy Stryker to document the social and personal impact of the Great Depression. Nevertheless, interest among visual sociologists in applied work was hindered by the absence of a documentary tradition within the discipline even though Robert Lynd, for example, had prepared training materials for Stryker's FSA photographers.

However, other related fields, such as anthropology and urban planning, were more sympathetic to the use of photographs and films in applied work. John Collier, for example, was employed during the 1950s in Peru and New Brunswick on rural development projects, which were directed by anthropologists from Cornell University. The urbanist William H. Whyte challenged Urban Renewal policies in the 1960s and founded a new urbanism that emphasized the value that public space has nurtured spontaneous sociability and organic communities. Whyte (1979, 1980, 1988) used time-lapse photography and film in movies and books such as *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* and *The City: Redefining the Center* to challenge conventional wisdom in contemporary social psychology about the deleterious effects of crowding. His films demonstrated that most people reveled being in close proximity to others and showed that choreographing behavior in public places with complete strangers was easily learned and managed. Wagner drew on this tradition of engaged inquiry in his seminal *Images of Information*, where a number of contributors used photography as a conscious tool in improving urban design (Wagner 1979b; Zube 1979), architecture (Ellis 1979; Lifchez 1979), and teaching (Krieger 1979).

Three recent studies integrate visual methods into applied social research and design innovative applications. Wakefield and Underwager (1998), in a comprehensive review of the use of visually perceptible images in child abuse investigations, find that many techniques in current use (anatomically correct dolls, puppets, children's drawings, play therapy, and other projective tests) are generally ineffective and often encourage children to imagine fantasies as real. Those techniques that elicit the most reliable and valid information, however, encourage free recall by jogging children's memory with photographs or imaging exercises.

Rich and Chalfen's (1999) project with teenage asthmatics, described earlier, is the first in a series of clinical research studies where patients collect data about their experience of illness and its contexts. Rich and his associates document a lack of congruence between the circumstances of patients' lives, their health behaviors, and what their physicians know about them (Rich et al. 2000). They also show that while obesity among children and adolescents is most often accompanied by negative health and psychological and social effects, it also has some positive features, including "protection against sexual objectification, physical dominance, and making a political statement" (Rich et al. 2002:100). The Video Intervention/Prevention Assessment methodology developed by Rich and his associates includes a protocol for shooting instructions, schedule, logging, and coding of videotape (Rich and Patashnick 2002) and is currently being extended to study patients with spina bifida, sickle-cell anemia, and other conditions ([www.viaproject.org](http://www.viaproject.org)).

Finally, Powsner and Tufte (1994) have designed a template for digitized medical records that can include more than 1,800 bits of information on a single page. The record is designed in such a way that a health practitioner can not only read the data in each of 24 small repeated graphs with identical formats but also compare them and assess their interrelationships:

Our graphical summary of patient status maps findings and treatments over time . . . and allows for consideration of alternative diagnostic and management strategies . . . Graphical summaries will be especially useful during case conferences or teaching exercises: all the participants, each with a copy, can review the history and treatment. (P. 389)

Such a design eliminates major sources of miscommunication in health care (Grady 2006).

The steadily declining cost of recording and other research equipment makes applied visual research more available to more marginal and less affluent organizations and communities. In addition, more applied work leads to the design of more applications, some of which are customized to the needs of a particular project, while other projects may appropriate technology and techniques used in completely different fields for different purposes.

## DISCUSSION

Close scrutiny of these five separate contributions suggests that visual sociology is not on a trajectory to

become a new field of sociology. Rather, it enriches and broadens the prevailing concerns of the discipline. Visual sociologists do many things. One will photograph or film people in their everyday locales as they go about their lives. Another might rephotograph settings, revisit subjects, and use old photographs to document and measure change. Others will talk about photographs they have taken or discovered with those who might have something to say about what they see in the images or remember of the depicted events. Some visual sociologists construct legible charts and graphs that reveal patterns in quantitative data that otherwise might not be apparent and design unconventional ones for quantitative data that might never have been able to be charted at all. Many explore ways to identify, codify, and interpret the flood of images in the mass media that people use to assess themselves, their milieus, and to communicate with others. These are things that visual sociologists do when they observe, interview, and survey. They still take careful notes but will also log their photographs or videotape. They still tape record interviews even when talking with a subject about a photograph. They still conduct surveys, administer questionnaires, and utilize secondary data even as they value aesthetic considerations in visualizing the data they produce. Finally, some visual sociologists make movies or photo essays where they explore worlds that are either hidden or so taken for granted that they might as well have been hidden. All of these practices are what any sociologist would be expected to do if they had been trained to interpret and construct images for research purposes. In such a case, of course, they would be called *visual* sociologists.

Currently, visual sociologists express little interest in establishing what they do as a field of study in the larger discipline. The IVSA is a satisfactory clearinghouse for the multidisciplinary exchange of ideas necessary for improving visual research methods and image interpretation. Nevertheless, visual sociologists are strongly committed to integrating image-based research and interpretation into sociological training, research, and teaching. The incorporation of the visual into sociology has grown steadily and the pace at which new recording, communication, and data processing technologies are developing ensures that it will continue for the foreseeable future. When the dust clears a *more visual* sociology will have become a necessary condition of a *more robust* sociology, and images will have a place with both words and numbers as tools to understand how people do things together and what the consequences of these arrangements are for human welfare.

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## MATHEMATICAL SOCIOLOGY

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**M**athematics is the human activity of constructing axiomatic definitions of abstract patterns among unspecified or arbitrary elements and studying the properties of such patterns by deductive elaboration, using principles of logic. Any such abstract pattern, arising in such a context, may be said to define a class of mathematical objects, e.g., “differential equations,” “Markov chains,” “semigroups,” and “vector spaces.” If  $T$  is the axiomatic theory that defines a class  $M$  of mathematical objects, then any entity in  $M$  is said to be a  $T$ -model. Such models play a central role in the sciences. For example, Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1944) formulated the axiomatic theory of games of strategy, and this game theory ( $T$ ) defines the class  $M$  of game models.

As a science, sociology includes the use of such mathematical models. For most sociologists, however, this connection between mathematics and sociology is confined to problems of data analysis, employing *statistical models*. In other words, in this case the mathematical theory ( $T$ ) is the *theory of statistics*, and the  $T$ -models deal with such things as *linear regression* and *statistical significance tests*. However, the linkage between mathematics and sociology goes well beyond simple uses of applied statistics and extends back to the mid-twentieth century.

### ORIGINS OF THE FIELD

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After World War II, as part of a more general zeitgeist involving the deepening and broadening of the interpenetration of mathematics and the social and behavioral sciences, some sociologists began to employ mathematical models in contexts different from traditional data analysis. Their point of view was a common one in the newly developing field of *mathematical social science*. The idea was to create more rigorous scientific theories than had hitherto existed in the social and behavioral sciences (Berger et al. 1962). Traditionally, for instance, sociological theories were strong in intuitive content but weak from a formal point of view. Assumptions and definitions were not clearly stipulated and distinguished from factual descriptions and inferences. In particular, there was rarely a formal deduction of a conclusion from specified premises. The new and preferred style was encapsulated in the phrase “constructing a mathematical model.” This means making specified assumptions about some mathematical objects and providing an empirical interpretation for the ideas. It also means deducing properties of the model and comparing these with relevant empirical data.

*Mathematical sociology* was part of this general movement in the social and behavioral sciences. Sociologists who contributed most to the development of mathematical

sociology were greatly influenced by these wider developments, especially in disciplines with which sociology overlaps such as psychology, economics, and demography. Some of these wider developments will be briefly described because of their particular importance in this respect. Other examples of early work in mathematical social science may be found in the compendium edited by Lazarsfeld and Henry (1966).

Starting in the late 1940s, the mathematical biologist Anatol Rapoport developed a probabilistic approach to the characterization of large *social networks*. Starting from a baseline of a “random net” and then introducing “bias parameters,” Rapoport logically derived formulas connecting parameters such as density of contacts to important global network features, especially connectivity (Rapoport 1957). The logic of this approach is to compare these actual structural features with those that would hold if the network were generated by random connections. Then bias parameters that relate, for instance, to a tendency to transitivity (if a is connected to b and b to c, then a is connected to c) are shown to account for the way in which the real network differs from the random net, which functions as a baseline model.

In another early social networks development, mathematician Frank Harary and social psychologist Dorwin Cartwright collaborated in a discrete mathematical approach to social networks, featuring the theory of graphs—large parts of which were being created by Harary and his collaborators as they worked on social science problems. Graph theory is an axiomatic theory that defines models taking the form of an abstract pattern consisting of entities (nodes, points) in various pairwise relations (ties, edges, links). A graph model is employed to represent the network of connections among a set of acting units such as positive and negative sentiment relations among persons. From this starting point, Harary and Cartwright went on to prove the important and nonobvious structure theorem (Cartwright and Harary 1956). The theorem states that if a structure of interrelated positive and negative ties is balanced—illustrated by the psychological consistency of “my friend’s enemy is my enemy”—then it consists of two substructures, with positive ties within and negative ties between them. (There is a special case where one of the two substructures is empty.) Note that because the proof is based only on the formal object—the typical model in the specified class of models (which in this instance consists of *signed* graphs)—the theorem may be given various interpretations and associated differing empirical identifications that operationalize an interpretation.

In these two developments we have mathematical models bearing on the *analysis of structure*. Other early influential developments pertained to *process*. In the analysis of processes, two types of mathematical model are relevant: deterministic and stochastic.

An early example of the use of deterministic models is Herbert Simon’s (1952) mathematical formalization of a social systems theory set out by George Homans ([1950]

1992). Mechanisms describing interrelationships among the key variables of Homans’s theory—the intensity of interaction among group members, the level of friendliness, and the amounts of externally imposed and internally generated activity—are embedded in a system of differential equations. The system is then studied in its abstract form, leading to theorems about the dynamics and the implied equilibrium states.

The stochastic approach was strongly developed in mathematical learning theory (Bush and Mosteller 1955). The general probabilistic approach came to be known as stimulus sampling theory, in which the human being is viewed as sampling stimulus elements and connecting these to responses as a function of reinforcement contingencies. Intended for application to aggregate data acquired in experimental situations, these models enabled the derivation of predicted sequences of expected frequencies of a certain response under given conditions of reinforcement. Although the model is based on assumptions that refer to unobservable events (the stimulus sampling process), the derived predictions are in reference to observables (the over-time sequence of observed frequencies of a response) and thereby enable an empirical test of the theory based on the assumptions of the process that generates the observables. As in other such instances we will discuss, the model includes parameters pertaining to the underlying process (which usually appear as constants in derived equations). The values of these parameters are not usually known in the setting up of the model. To test the model, therefore, data need to be employed first to estimate the parameters. After parameter estimation, the data then can serve the function of testing the derived consequences, which can now be put in a definite numerical form corresponding to the particular values of the parameters. Hence, the construction of mathematical models of processes involves a sequence that includes such steps as deriving model predictions, estimating parameters, and testing for the goodness of fit between predicted and actual values of observables.

The field of mathematical sociology received self-conscious recognition with the work of James S. Coleman in the 1960s. Coleman came to sociology from an engineering background, studying with Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia University in the 1950s. As an engineer, he thought about social processes in terms of differential equations, as had Simon and others. But how could one connect differential equations to the data of sociology? That was Coleman’s question. He noted that surveys reported results in the forms of proportions. Yet the proportion of people believing or doing something at a given time had to be correctly interpreted. First, it was not necessarily a stable proportion since it could change. So such proportions should be conceptualized as states of a probabilistic dynamic system, with a flow of probabilities over time that might indeed have some equilibrium state. Second, although each person held a belief or voted a certain way, the process by which these individual orientations came about was socially mediated—that is, we



should understand the process by which the probability state changed over time as a network process in which individuals influence each other to change orientations. The results of these sorts of considerations were embodied in Coleman's (1964) widely influential *Introduction to Mathematical Sociology*. The publication of this book marks the legitimization of mathematical sociology as a distinctive and important part of sociology. Coleman's innovation was to show how processes in social networks could be analyzed in such a way as to come to grips with relevant sociological data, allowing empirical identification of abstractions, estimation of parameters, and calculations of the goodness of fit between model and data. Coleman's interest in purposive/rational action as the foundation for understanding social processes culminated in a major work on rational choice theory in sociology, including the use of the mathematics of general equilibrium theory (Coleman 1990).

## SCIENTIFIC REALISM AND THE THEORY OF MODELS

How should the models of mathematical sociology be viewed? Recent work in the philosophy of science and its implications for sociological inquiry in general and comparative historical sociological theories in particular and in the theory of models (Casti 1992a, 1992b; Land 2001) has converged to show the fundamental unity and continuity of the formal models of mathematical sociology with the statistical and verbal models of conventional sociology.

Gorski (2004) builds on recent developments in the branch of the philosophy of science known as *scientific realism*, the view that science seeks to reveal the underlying structures of the world that generate different outcomes under different conditions. He specifically uses an approach he calls *constructive realism*, which construes explanations as *linguistic representations* or causal models constructed out of theoretical terms. In the constructive realist model of explanation developed by Gorski, a scientific explanation is a semantic relation between causal models and causal processes or systems. A *causal model* is a simplified, linguistic representation of one or more real causal processes, which contribute to some set or type of outcomes. Thus, to explain something is to represent, and thereby make more comprehensible, the principal processes that produced it. A *theory* in this framework is a symbolic construct, stated in ordinary or mathematical language, that defines certain classes of objects and specifies their key properties. It is assumed that the objects refer to real entities in the world and the properties to actual qualities of these entities. In other words, a theory is a set of ontological assumptions that are used, explicitly or implicitly, in the construction of a causal model or models.

Gorski's version of scientific realism is similar to, but also different in certain respects from, the philosophical approach taken by Fararo (1989), who frames a synthesis

of scientific realism within the mathematical axiomatic method, thereby retaining the deductive element in sociological theorizing that Gorski largely abandons. The underlying difference is that one version of scientific realism is linked to historical interests—the explanation of particular events and trends—while the other is linked to a generalizing interest in the sense of explanation of abstractly stated empirical generalizations. (For a further discussion of the latter strategy see Fararo and Kosaka 2003, chap. 1.)

The scientific realist approach to sociological explanation can be compared with recent statements of the theory of models and its application in sociology (Casti 1992a, 1992b; Land 2001). We now sketch a formal representation for the theory of models to illustrate its compatibility with the constructive realist approach and to show that many classes of sociological models, from verbal to statistical to mathematical, can be accommodated within this formalism. The *theory of models* commences with the following general and encompassing definition:

Models are cognitive tools, namely linguistic devices, by which individuals order and organize experiences and observations.

Experiences/observations vary among individuals and can be organized in many different ways. Even if the observations are common and shared, as in the case of a single set of observations on specific social phenomena summarized in a data set, they can be organized in different ways. It follows that there can be many different models of the same experiences/observations. Hence, as Casti (1992b:380) notes, there can be many alternative realities—at least to the degree that individuals represent reality in models.

An implication of this generic definition of models is that virtually every functioning person in a society can be presumed to be a modeler. Beginning with the characterization of natural language as a tool for ordering and describing experiences (see, e.g., Whorf 1956), one can regard much of linguistic, popular, and material culture as providing the “tools” by which individuals, on a day-to-day basis, model their experiences (see Swidler 1986). And, of course, it is the objective of long traditions of ethnographic research in sociology and anthropology to record and study the structure of such “natural” models.

Another implication of this definition is that many of the verbal characterizations of social phenomena that we use in sociology are properly regarded and respected as models. Many of these *verbal models* have stimulated much research over many years and will continue to do so. As one of just two examples, Notestein's (1945) verbally stated *demographic transition model* stimulated social demographers to focus their research attention on a host of historical and contemporary questions about trends in birth and death rates and their relationship to economic development

and improvements in health and longevity. Similarly, the verbally stated *life-course model* that has been developed over the years by many sociologists and articulated succinctly by Elder (2000) has stimulated the work of researchers with many diverse substantive interests.

Taking models most generically as cognitive tools for ordering our experiences, formal or mathematical models can be defined as follows:

*Formal or mathematical models* encapsulate some slice of experiences/observations within the confines of the relationships constituting a formal system such as formal logic, mathematics, or statistics. (Casti 1992a:1)

Thus, a *formal sociological model* is a way of representing aspects of social phenomena within the framework of a formal apparatus that provides us with a means for exploring the properties of the social life mirrored in the model. Why construct formal sociological models? Why not just use verbally stated models? Basically, we construct formal models to assist in bringing a more clearly articulated order to our experiences and observations as well as to organize more complex theories of experiences and observations and to make more precise predictions about certain aspects of the social world (Lave and March 1975). Henceforth, we will drop the *formal* or *mathematical* adjective and simply use the term *models*.

Some notation will be useful. Consider a particular subset  $S$  of social life, and suppose that  $S$  can exist in a set of distinct *abstract states*  $\Omega = \{\omega_1, \omega_2, \dots\}$ . The set  $\Omega$  defines the *state space* of  $S$ . Whether or not the sociological observer can determine the state of  $S$  at a particular moment of study depends on the experiences, observations, or measurements (*observables*) at the sociologist's disposal. An *observable* of  $S$  is a rule  $f$  associating a real number with each  $\omega$  in the state space  $\Omega$ . More formally, an observable is a map  $f: \Omega \rightarrow R$ .

For example, consider the abstract empirical generalization that as initially unacquainted members of task groups interact, a status hierarchy tends to emerge. The explanation, in a realist mode, employs a model in which the state space consists of the conjunction of underlying performance expectation states as to ability levels relevant to the task. These states are not observable in the flow of interaction—either to the members or to the observing sociologist. The observables are the acts of the individuals. Postulated expectation states and a coding of the acts together yield a particular interpretation of the general notion of a state space and one or more observables defined on it. Theoretical assumptions about the interaction process generate a trajectory of the group in state space along with derived predictions about the observables, thereby enabling empirical tests of the assumptions (Skvoretz and Fararo 1996).

Generally, for a full accounting of social life, many sociologists feel that we need an infinite number of observables  $f_\alpha: \Omega \rightarrow R$ , where the subscript  $\alpha$  ranges over a

possibly uncountable index set. Thus, the complete slice of social life  $S$  is described by  $\Omega$  and the possibly *infinite set of observables*  $F = \{f_\alpha\}$ . But it is impossible to deal with such a large set of observables, and it is not necessary to do so to build useful sociological models and/or theories. As Smith-Lovin (2000) has argued,

Social life is very complex. To be completely described, any historical event or current interactional situation requires a virtually infinite catalog of contextual, historically specific information to be conveyed . . . But the fact that social life is complex does not imply that we need complex descriptions of it . . . Indeed, I think that the most successful theories often focus on just one basic process, while most situations involve the simultaneous occurrences of many different processes. (P. 302)

In brief, in model construction, most of the possible observables in social life are thrown away and attention is focused on a *proper subset*  $A$  of  $F$ . It is, of course, the case that this means that our models may poorly capture the full complexity and nuances of social life. Certainly, this would be true of our example of the emergence of a status hierarchy in any group in a natural setting. This, again, reinforces the position that models are worth constructing and dealing with only if they assist in bringing a more clearly articulated order to experiences and observations and in making more precise predictions about certain aspects of the social world. Baseline, oversimplified models also can be criticized and improved.

We now can characterize a *sociological model*  $S^*$  as an abstract state space  $\Omega$  together with a finite set of observables  $f_i: \Omega \rightarrow R$ ,  $i = 1, 2, \dots, n$ . Symbolically,

$$S^* = \{\Omega, f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n\}.$$

To capture the scientific realist sense of a model, the *observables may be regarded as in two classes*. One class represents the *observable conditions* under which some process in state space occurs. In turn, these divide into the slow-changing conditions that can be represented as *constant parameters* in the time frame of the process and the more rapid changing conditions that can be called *inputs*. The other class represents the observable *outputs* of the process. These outputs—acts in the context of the emergent status hierarchy example—depend on the state and the inputs at the particular moment.

Note that, in that example, the outputs become inputs as the members observe acts. The complexity of the interaction process is thereby reflected in the complexity of the generative model.

A model that is *static*, that is, not dynamic, in this sense may be regarded as a special case of the general form given by

$$\text{Change of state} = F(\text{state, input})$$

$$\text{Outputs} = G(\text{state, input})$$

If the change of state is zero—as in static models—then the first of these expressions becomes

$$M_i(\text{state}, f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n) = 0, \quad i = 1, 2, \dots, m,$$

where the  $M_i(f_j)$  are mathematical relationships expressing the dependence relations among the observables. This can be more compactly written as

$$M(f) = 0. \quad [9.1]$$

Now suppose that the last  $m$  observables,  $f_{n-m+1}, \dots, f_n$ , called *endogenous* (or determined within the system under consideration), are functions of the remaining observables,  $f_1, f_2, \dots, f_{n-m}$ , where the latter are termed *exogenous* (or determined outside the system under consideration). The endogenous terms of the static model correspond to the outputs of the dynamic model and the exogenous terms correspond to the inputs to the system with the given state description.

In other words, suppose we can define  $m$  functional relations, with some finite number  $r$  of numerical parameters,  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_r$ , for determining values of the endogenous observables as a function of the exogenous observables. Then, if we introduce the notation

$$\beta \propto (\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_r)$$

to denote the vector of parameters and the notation

$$x \propto (f_1, f_2, \dots, f_{n-m})$$

and

$$y \propto (f_{n-m+1}, f_{n-m+2}, \dots, f_n)$$

to denote vectors of the exogenous and endogenous observables, henceforth *variables*, respectively, then the equations of state become

$$y = \Phi_\beta(\text{state}, x). \quad [9.2]$$

This last expression now is beginning to take on a form similar to the sociological models often seen in practice. In particular, suppose we define an additive vector

$$\varepsilon = (\varepsilon_{n-m+1}, \varepsilon_{n-m+2}, \dots, \varepsilon_n)$$

of error terms (with the usual specifications on the error terms, namely, that the expected value of each  $\varepsilon_i$ ,  $E(\varepsilon_i) = 0$  with constant variance,  $E(\varepsilon_i \varepsilon_j) = \sigma^2_{\varepsilon_i}$ ,  $i = 1, 2, \dots, m$ ), one for each endogenous variable, to take explicitly into account the fact that there may be stochastic shocks to the equations of state due either to factors unaccounted for in our system model or to an intrinsic random element in the behavior of the endogenous variables. Then the equations of state, Equation 9.2, become

$$y = \Phi_\beta(\text{state}, x) + \varepsilon. \quad [9.3]$$

Equation 9.3 now is in a form such that many of the common formalisms used in model construction in sociology can be recognized as special cases.

To highlight this, we now treat the state variable as measured by one or more of the observables (functioning as indicators) rather than, as in the status hierarchy example, defined as an underlying unobservable element. Thus, a special case of Expression 9.3 applies in which the state variable is suppressed. Consider the following instances:

- If  $m = 1$ , so that the vector  $y$  of endogenous variables contains a single element, then the equations of state, Equation 9.3, reduce to the form of a *conventional regression model*. If, in addition,  $y$  is a continuous variable, Equation 9.3 becomes a *classical regression model*, either linear or nonlinear, depending on the function form of  $\Phi_\beta$ , whereas a dichotomous  $y$  and a logistic form for  $\Phi_\beta$  yield a *logistic regression model* (Neter et al. 1996). Other specifications of measurement and functional formats yield other types of regression models, including the *multilevel* or *hierarchical models* for the analysis of contextual effects and growth models that have been developed and widely applied in recent years (see, e.g., Raudensbush and Bryk 2002).

- In the case where  $y$  contains  $m$  endogenous variables, Equation 9.3 is in a form similar to that of the reduced form of a *classical econometric/structural equation model*. If the functional form  $\Phi_\beta$  incorporates recursive or nonrecursive dependences among the endogenous variables, then the equations of state, Equation 9.3, are in the structural-equation form of a classical econometric/structural equation model (Christ 1966). If explicit measurement errors of the exogenous variables and/or endogenous variables are specified in addition to structural equations linking latent variables, then the equations of state, Equation 9.3, take the form of contemporary *simultaneous-equation models* (SEMs, also termed *structural equation models with latent variables*, of which LISREL models are the most widely known (Bollen 1989; Hoyle 1995).

- The characterization of formal models given in the foregoing and the notions of observables and equations of state also can be applied to many other types of modeling formalisms used in sociology. For instance, the equations of state can be given a *dynamic formulation* by specifying them in *differential or stochastic differential equation form*. If the endogenous variables then are defined in terms of time to a transition of some type, the equations of state then may yield *hazard or event history regression models*.

In brief, the formalism represented by Equation 9.3 is capable of subsuming the logics of many approaches to the development of models in sociology, from verbal to statistical to mathematical and within the latter, both dynamic and static models. Thus, there is an intrinsic

continuity between mathematical sociology and other parts of sociology.

Continuing with the parallels between constructive realism and the theory of models, we note that the terms *model* and *theory* are sometimes distinguished and sometimes used interchangeably. Usually, however, scientific theories are regarded as more general than scientific models:

*A theory is a family of related models, and a model is a formal manifestation of a particular theory. (Casti 1992b:382)*

A key characteristic of models, as noted in the foregoing, is that they are constructed relative to a given set of observables. Theories, on the other hand, are more generally applicable to numerous sets of observables. One example is the expectation states theory mentioned above, which is far more general than the particular model that was sketched (Wagner and Berger 2002). Another example, as mentioned earlier, is *game theory* (Fudenberg and Tirole 1991), which can be construed as a family of models of the behavior we observe when rational decision makers interact. The game theory family of models is more general than, say, a *game-theoretic model* of crime control policies and criminal decision making (de Mesquita and Cohen 1995). In this case, because game theory is a mathematical theory, the family of models is defined by a set of axioms, as noted earlier. As another example, but now pertaining to a nonmathematical type of theory, *functionalism* as a sociological theory can be regarded as a family of functionalist models of social structures and processes (see, e.g., Turner 1991). And functionalist sociological theory is more general than, say, a *functionalist model* of how organizations try to reduce uncertainty in their environments (Thompson 1967).

From sociological theories and theories in other social and biological sciences, sociologists develop ideas about what observations and measurements of social life should be made, generative mechanisms (Fararo 1989; Hedström and Swedberg 1998; Smith-Lovin 2000) with which to build and choose models, and hypotheses to be tested. But since sociological theories are typically stated in very general terms, they leave measurement instruments and functional forms of models to be specified. At this point, models become relevant. They develop linkages of theory to observations and data (Land 1971). Indeed, Skvoretz (1998) has forcefully argued that *theoretical models*—models that represent the generative mechanisms and processes embodied in sociological theory—are the missing or underdeveloped link in the discipline today.

Yet sociological theory sometimes does not provide complete guidelines for model building, which often leads to controversies about the adequacy of models constructed and applied in sociology. The following are two important issues of this kind:

- The endogenous-exogenous distinction
- Model completeness

Sometimes there is no disagreement that certain variables are appropriately specified as exogenous or determined outside a particular set of functional relationships. At other times, however, questions certainly can be raised, and disputes over the “endogenous/exogenous” distinction often are at the heart of disagreements over the “correct” model specification. Questions about “model completeness” also are often sources of dispute concerning the adequacy of sociological models. An analyst, in an effort to be complete, may extend the list of exogenous variables to a very large number. This can produce models with so many explanatory variables that the interpretation of results becomes difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, some of the most damaging critiques of models are the claims that the modelers omitted variables (observables) that were centrally important to understanding the behavior of the observables employed. A dividing line on this issue also often depends on one’s theoretical versus empirical orientation toward modeling. Those who approach the construction of sociological models from a theoretical perspective tend to emphasize parsimony in model specification (e.g., Smith-Lovin 2000). Empirically oriented modelers, on the other hand, often feel that many explanatory variables are necessary for model completeness (e.g., in discussing the complications in sociological modeling due to multiple causation, Blalock (1984) stated that “upwards of 40 or 50 factors [may be] at work” (p. 40) in the determination of a social phenomenon).

In sum, there are remarkable parallels between the recent scientific realist approach to explanations in sociology and the theory of models. These parallels show the unity and continuity of models in sociology, from verbal to statistical to mathematical, and the commonality of uses of mathematical models in sociology with those in other scientific disciplines.

## MODELS OF SOCIAL PROCESSES

We now turn to a review of models of several types of social objects that are found in contemporary mathematical sociology. Consider first the *modeling of social processes*. To represent a social process, some sort of dynamic model is required. The basic ingredients in such a type of model are as follows.

Time domain: discrete or continuous

State space: discrete or continuous

Parameter space: discrete or continuous

Generator: deterministic or stochastic

Postulational basis: equations, transition rules

These ingredients are obvious in the case of physical theories, and sociologists employing system models (such as Parsons and Homans) were committed to the project of

carrying this type of analysis into sociological theory. No clearer example of this exists than in Homans's treatment of the social system in *The Human Group* (Homans [1950] 1992). So clearly did Homans try to model his discursive analysis of group phenomena on the setup and analysis of a system of differential equations that shortly after this book appeared it was formalized as noted in the foregoing by Herbert Simon (1952). Simon postulated the basic mechanisms described by Homans in terms of quantitative expressions in a differential equation (deterministic continuous-state, continuous-time) model with continuous parameters. Simon's paper has been an exemplar for sociologists who formalize theories in terms of differential equations, for instance, Land's (1970) formalization of the dynamics of Durkheim's (1933) classical theory of the division of labor in society and Mayer's (2002) class dynamics model of the collapse of Soviet communism.

As mentioned earlier, Coleman (1964), responsive to the needs of survey research with its discrete data summarized as proportions, developed a family of dynamic models that are stochastic processes in continuous-time with discrete states but continuous parameters. Each individual makes transitions from one discrete state to another—for instance, shifting candidates during an election campaign—and the group makes transitions among states representing the number of individuals in each of the discrete individual states (e.g., the number of people favoring a particular candidate at a particular time). With estimation of parameters by statistical methods, followed by tests for the goodness of fit of the model, this Coleman methodology extends to the social network context in which each individual's transition is influenced by a composite flow of influence from other individuals to whom the person is connected in some social relationship. (For an introduction to this type of model, see Fararo ([1973] 1978, chap. 13) and for another type of dynamic model of social influence in a network context with numerous applications, see Friedkin (1998).)

Formally, the stochastic processes that Coleman invoked are *Markov chains*. Such Markov chains are directly analogous to deterministic processes and, in fact, are deterministic at the level of probabilities: Future probability distributions depend only on the present distribution and not on earlier ones. Other applications of Markov chains became common in the field of mathematical sociology. In particular, social mobility was the subject of a considerable number of mathematical modeling efforts in which Markov chains played a large role (Fararo [1973] 1978, chap. 16). More generally, stochastic processes have played an important role in theory and methodology in sociology (Tuma and Hannan 1984).

Of particular interest in sociology are two types of process models that relate to the concept of social structure. In one type, the structure is represented by a network or some other model object, and other phenomena are taken as "dependent variables." The aim is to show how the outcome of a postulated process varies with parameters descriptive of the social structure, as represented in the

structural model. This is illustrated by the research tradition involving the analysis of exchanges in networks (see Willer 1992). The shape of the network is the parameter, and the eventual distribution of resources among occupants of positions in the network is the dependent variable. Theoretical models of the process postulate how actors make and respond to offers, leading up to competed exchanges and so the eventual resource distribution.

In the other type of model, the structure is treated as emergent. The previously mentioned interaction process model involving the use of expectation states or *E-states* may serve to illustrate this (Skvoretz and Fararo 1996). The structure in this instance is local, that is, specific to a given group of actors and emergent in their situated interaction. The dynamic process involves the over-time construction of stable relationships among pairs of actors until equilibrium, when the postulated rules lead to a reproduction of the generated pattern of relationships. In this model, the state space consists of a set of logically possible forms of structure in the network sense. The emergent structure is a set of social relationships among group members, each defined in terms of stabilized E-states. The process is the trip through this space. Which trip is taken, in terms of which network states are visited, depends on the initial state, the parameters, and the specific realization of the stochastic process representation of the generator.

There is another mode of model specification and study that instantiates the dynamic type of theoretical model and that relates to the emergence of structure, namely *computer simulation*. Simulation models are generative of specific instances of "observables" from postulated rules that mimic a concatenation of social processes. These specific instances are pseudo-data outputs of the simulation, so that it is often necessary to employ statistical or graphical methods to reduce these "data" to an interpretable form in which the analyst can conclude that the process generates various types of outcomes as conditions vary.

Simulation models arise in at least *two different contexts*. In one context, a mathematical model is postulated or derived that involves nonlinear equations, for which analytical solutions are generally unavailable. The analyst may be able to derive qualitative results but may also turn to computer simulation to generate particular instances of the over-time behavior of the system of variables. The other context involves the postulation of rules of behavior of a collection of actors to generate the over-time consequences of their interactions. The dynamics of the system is given by the concatenation of simulated actions rather than by a system of equations. One important class of examples involves the problem of social order in social theory, in which theorists postulate rules of behavior in a repeated Prisoner's Dilemma context and then simulate the over-time emergence of cooperation under various conditions represented in an "artificial world." Examples of this type and other social simulation models may be found in the online *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* (in particular, see Macy 1998).

## MODELS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Sociologists have employed at least *four different types of models in the analysis of structure in social life*. We may regard these as four representation principles under the following headings: structure as *network*; structure as *distribution*; structure as *grammar*; and structure as *game*.

In earlier sections we have made reference to the *network representation of structure*. The metaphor of a social system as a network, widely employed informally in sociology, was transformed into a mode of model building and analysis through a convergence of ideas and techniques from several disciplines. One such source was *sociometry* (Moreno 1934), involving the analysis of network diagrams indicating relationships among people in a small population. *Balance theory* was another source, where in this case positive and negative sentiments were represented in diagrams and analyzed in terms of the balance among the relationships. These ideas were absorbed into social network analysis via the formalization of the ideas in terms of *signed graph theory*, a branch of mathematics built to deal with structures of positive and negative sentiment relations (Harary, Norman, and Cartwright 1965). A third source was the analysis of *structures of kinship*, especially after the publication of an influential monograph by White (1963).

Sociometric models, balance-theoretic models, models of kinship structure, and other model-building efforts, such as those treating diffusion processes, converged by the late 1970s, and the term *social network paradigm* was used to describe this whole area of model building (Leinhardt 1977). Over time, it became common in sociology for measured properties of networks to be employed in the formulation and testing of empirical hypotheses about the behavior of actors. For instance, concepts such as status, centrality, and power have been defined in operational ways in terms of the network representation of structure. By the late twentieth century, social network analysis had become a mode of structural analysis with an extensive battery of formal techniques at its disposal (Scott 1991; Wasserman and Faust 1994) and with significant contributions to the analysis of substantive problems (e.g., Burt 1992).

Social network analysis has been regarded by most macrosociologists as not the sort of model required for the description of macrostructure. Sociologists often speak, in the latter context, of such entities as *occupational structure* or *income structure*. These terms refer to *distributions*. Blau (1977) proposed a systematic theory in which the key analytical properties of such distributions, in relation to rates of intergroup relations, provide one type of answer to the Durkheimian problem of the nature of the integration of a large complex social system. Blau employed the concepts of heterogeneity, inequality, and consolidation as such key parameters and formulated theorems relating them to the extent of intergroup relations, for example, rates of intermarriage.

A definite model that would represent such a macrostructure was not a part of this theory, but subsequently a mathematical model was developed (Skvoretz

1983). The model is based on the concept of a biased net, namely a network that departs from a random network in specified ways represented by bias parameters. All the key variables of Blau's theory are formally linked to key parameters of the *biased net model*—in particular, the contact density and the connectivity of the network. The latter ideas had been important in the social networks tradition, particularly in the strand of work encapsulated in the notion of “the strength of weak ties” (Granovetter 1973). By synthesizing this “micro” strand of network analysis with the Blau-type macrosociology, this development exhibited one of the important theoretical benefits of formal model building: episodes of unification (Fararo [1973] 1978, chap. 4).

A third type of model of structure emerges out of the language analogy or metaphor. European linguists, after the foundational work of de Saussure ([1915] 1966), distinguished between language as a system and the particular utterances that occur in given occasions. American linguists, after the pioneering work of Chomsky (1957), treated language as an infinite system of legitimate possible utterances generated by a finite set of rules, its grammar. In the social sciences, *structuralism* has been a perspective based on the idea that in some sense, social and cultural systems should be treated with a languagelike model (Lévi-Strauss [1958] 1963). One implication of this idea is abstraction from time: The system exists as an infinite totality to be analyzed using algebraic or other formal tools.

However, the idea of a set of finite rules of *social structure as grammar* that generates a system of symbolically mediated interactions has been synthesized with information processing representations that had been developed in cognitive psychology (Newell and Simon 1972). The resulting model can be studied from two points of view. On the one hand, the finite rule basis and the institution stand to each as grammar and language: the analysis is in the spirit of structuralism. On the other hand, the finite rule basis can be used to analyze a system of symbolic interaction as it is generated locally and in real time. The system of finite rules is a generative mechanism, and the “outputs” are streams of coordinated social action by the socialized occupants of institutional positions. From this standpoint, the model is a special case of the general form of sociological model cited earlier, with the exception that the state and the observables are nonnumerical. This synthesis was motivated by the attempt to explicate the sociological concept of *institution* and to thereby provide a method for the formal analysis of institutional structures at various levels of the organization of action and interaction (Fararo and Skvoretz 1984). This type of model is one among a variety of those that have arisen out of sociological applications of techniques drawn from artificial intelligence, linguistics, and cognitive science (Bainbridge et al. 1994). One example is affect control theory, which employs a mathematical model grounded in grammatical analysis and control systems theory to analyze social interaction in symbolic interactionist terms (Heise 1979, 1989).

A fourth way in which sociologists have represented structure is again focused on the organization of action, treating a *structure of action as a game in the formal sense of the mathematical theory of games*. An utterance in a particular language is analogous to a play of a particular game. And the rules of the game play the role of the grammar. Given the rules of the game, a tree of all possible sequential unfoldings of the game is implied. However, the focus in game-theoretic analysis is on strategic interaction, so that a model of rational choice supplements the game model. The aim of the game-theoretic model-builder is to derive the consequences of rational choices made by each player, often with a view of showing how outcomes involve “perverse effects” (Boudon 1982). Thus, an alternative to the grammatical model of structure is the game model. The former emphasizes emergent order at the level of the tacit or implicit rules governing institutionalized social action. The latter emphasizes the way in which the structure, as represented by the game, produces predictable and often paradoxical effects from the conjunction of rational choices.

## POPULATION MODELS

Mathematical modeling has been extensively developed and applied in the discipline of demography. Sociology overlaps substantially with demography because an essential feature of a society is its human population. The survival of a society's population from birth and childhood through the adult years and its reproduction through fertility are the fundamental processes studied by demographers. Associated with these processes is an *age structure*, which is the fundamental structure studied by demographers. There is a long tradition of mathematical models of the survival or mortality and fertility processes in demography, with roots in actuarial science, biostatistics, epidemiology, mathematics, and statistics, fields with which it retains strong ties today (see, e.g., Jordan 1975; Keyfitz 1977, 1985; Lotka [1924] 1956; Smith and Keyfitz 1977). Through the population models used in mathematical demography, sociology thus has ties to these other scientific fields as well. Space limitations do not permit any detailed exposition of the life table, stable population, and reproductive models of demography (for recent reviews, see Land, Yang, and Yi 2005; Preston, Heuveline, and Guillot 2001; Schoen 1988).

As but one example of recent developments in population models, consider the measurement of the level of fertility in a human population. Although the demographic literature contains many measures of fertility, the period total fertility rate (TFR) is now used more often than any other indicator. The TFR is defined as the average number of births a woman would have if she were to live through her reproductive years (usually taken as ages 15 to 49) and bear children at each age at the rates observed in a particular year or period. The actual childbearing of cohorts of women is given by the completed or cohort fertility rate (CFR), which measures the average

number of births 50-year-old women had during their past reproductive years. Formally, let  $f_p(t, a)$  denote the age-specific fertility rates for women aged  $a$  at time  $t$ , and let  $f_c(T, a)$  represent the age-specific fertility rates at age  $a$  for cohorts of women born at time  $T$ . Then the *period total fertility rate* for time  $t$  is

$$\text{TFR}(t) = \int f_p(t, a) da, \quad [9.4]$$

and the CFR for the cohort born at time  $T$  is

$$\text{CFR}(T) = \int f_c(T, a) da. \quad [9.5]$$

In applications, the integrals are replaced by finite summations, and the sums are taken over the reproductive ages. Note also that the TFR can be made specific to the order of births (i.e., first, second, and so forth), but to simplify the notation, subscripts for the order of births are omitted.

The CFR measures the true reproductive experiences of a well-defined group of women. But it has the disadvantage of representing past experience, as women currently of age 50 did most of their childbearing two to three decades ago, when they were in their 20s and 30s. The advantage of the TFR is that it measures current fertility and therefore gives up-to-date information on levels and trends in fertility. The TFR also has a convenient metric (births per woman) that nondemographers can readily understand.

However, the TFR has been widely subjected to criticism among demographers. Demographers interpret the conventional period TFR ( $\text{TFR}(t)$ ) as the total number of births an average member of a hypothetical cohort would have for her whole life if this hypothetical cohort *exactly* (with no changes in quantum or level, tempo, or timing of births across the ages and in the shape of the fertility schedule) experienced the observed period age-specific fertility rates. This interpretation is equivalent to imagining that the observed period age-specific fertility rates are *constantly* extended sufficiently many years into the future (e.g., 35 years), so that a hypothetical cohort would have gone through the whole reproductive life span (e.g., from age 15 to 49) during this imagined extended period. This unadjusted conventional period TFR is the total number of births an average member of the hypothetical cohort would have for her whole life in such a static situation, in the absence of mortality throughout the reproductive ages. Note, however, that the assumption of no changes in tempo or timing of births inherent in the conventional period,  $\text{TFR}(t)$ , is violated when the timing of fertility is changing. This violation results in well-known distortions of the conventional period  $\text{TFR}(t)$ .

For this reason, Bongaarts and Feeney (1998) proposed an adjusted version of the period total fertility rate to minimize tempo effects—distortions in the observed  $\text{TFR}(t)$  due to changes in the tempo or timing of births. Specifically, based on the underlying assumption that the shape of the period age-specific fertility schedule does not

change and on its implied assumption about equal changes in timing of births at all reproductive ages, Bongaarts and Feeney (1998) derived the following *quantum adjustment formula*:

$$\text{TFR}'(t) = \text{TFR}(t)/(1 - r(t)), \quad [9.6]$$

where  $\text{TFR}'(t)$  is the adjusted order-specific TFR in year  $t$ ,  $\text{TFR}(t)$  is the observed period order-specific TFR in year  $t$ , and  $r(t)$  is the annual change in the order-specific period mean age at childbearing in year  $t$ . The annual change,  $r(t)$ , is defined as the difference in the mean age at childbearing of a particular birth order between two successive years. The unit of  $r(t)$  is "years old/per year."

The Bongaarts-Feeney (B-F) quantum adjustment formula in Equation 9.6 looks like a relatively simple and straightforward adjustment to a long-standing fertility indicator used by demographers. But its development has led to substantial discussion, controversy, and additional analysis and applications to other topics in population models (see, e.g., Kim and Schoen 2000; Kohler and Philipov 2001; Van Imhoff and Keilman 2000; Zeng and Land 2001, 2002). This has contributed to a better understanding of how tempo changes in the age schedules of fertility and mortality can affect the fertility and mortality rates calculated by demographers and how these, in turn, can affect estimates of indices of these processes such as fertility rates and life expectancies from the corresponding population models.

## CONCLUSION

With origins in the mid-twentieth century, when a relatively few social scientists began to explore the idea of

framing theories in mathematical form, mathematical sociology has grown considerably, as measured by the extent of journal literature in the field over time (Edling 2002). In addition to the texts already cited, a very accessible introduction is provided by Leik and Meeker (1975). Article-length contributions involving mathematical models regularly appear in the field's major comprehensive journals, the *American Sociological Review*, *The American Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*. In addition, there are specialist journals that regularly publish contributions to mathematical sociology, including *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, *Sociological Methodology*, *Rationality and Society*, and *Social Networks*. In addition, in the United States, the American Sociological Association includes a mathematical sociology section that organizes a yearly set of sessions where new work is presented in its prepublication stage.

Another way of noting the penetration of mathematical sociology into the broader field is to take note of theoretical research programs in which theory and research are linked in part through theoretical models in mathematical form. A theoretical research program is a long-term multiperson program for developing a system of interrelated theories in relation to empirical research. For instance, the recent publication *New Directions of Contemporary Sociological Theory* (Berger and Zelditch 2002) contains introductions to more than a dozen such programs of the larger number that exist in the field. In short, mathematical sociology is a thriving part of the field of sociology that we expect will continue to produce fresh examples of the types of model building that we have sketched and that contribute to the advancement of our empirical knowledge of the social world.



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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF RISK

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Since their evolutionary origins humans have been confronted with risk—threats to themselves and what they value. It will always be so, even if the threats change dramatically, from that of the saber-toothed tigers threatening our ancestors to the possibility of runaway nanotechnologies facing our descendants. Roots of the idea of risk, that humans can exercise their unique quality of agency to anticipate, assess, avoid, or reduce risk consequences can be traced to very ancient times. For example, in the Tigris-Euphrates valley around 3200 BC lived a group called the Asipu who acted as a new type of seer, not as one who claims to foresee the future, but one who is consulted on risky, uncertain, or difficult decisions (Covello and Mumpower 1985). Still in ancient times, 1700 BC, the Code of Hammurabi included a variety of proscriptions about risk in its 282 clauses.

But the early foundations of the modern idea of risk do not occur until centuries later, in classical Greece. It was there that we find the first use of the word risk (*rhiza*) in the works of Homer. It is there, too, that we find the first instance of risk transfer, an incipient version of modern day insurance called “bottomry.” It was a loan made to a ship owner to finance the ship’s voyage, but remarkably

enough, the debt was forgiven if the ship was lost or sunk (Ziskind 1974). Evolving over the centuries that followed was a refined version of bottomry that we now know as modern insurance, in all its variations.

Despite these ancient beginnings, and despite subsequent refinements accompanying the rise of the insurance industry, risk as an analytic tool is a product of high modernity. More particularly, risk is a child of advanced industrialization with its vast increase in the scale and interconnection of complex technologies. The increased complexity of technology was punctuated with the technological advances of World War II—especially the harnessing of the atom for destructive purposes. After the war, the vast potential of that knowledge was directed not only at making larger destructive devices but also for peaceful purposes, principally in the commercial application of nuclear energy for the generation of electricity. And it is in the nuclear industry, owing to the prodigious growth in the size of nuclear reactors, that we find the first applications of formal risk assessment with the application of probabilistic risk assessment (PRA) (cf. U.S. Atomic Energy Commission 1975). PRA is a highly reductionistic methodology where all the components of a technological system

are broken down into their elementary parts, where the probability of each part is estimated, and where overall risk is the aggregation of these individual risks. While other assessment techniques followed PRA, its rational, reductionistic framework continues to dominate the field of risk assessment (Jaeger et al. 2001).

Acknowledgment that the world is sated with natural and human-created risks, recognition that the social fabric itself is at risk (Short 1984), and realization that risk is manifested in ever increasing consequences led to a recognition that risk is unavoidable—but subject to anticipation and management. It also led to making risk analysis the key analytic lens for anticipating the untoward outcomes of natural or social forces. The analysis of “natural” and technological risks has now become an institutionalized practice in developing public policy and in establishing standards and regulations.

The pervasiveness of risks and recognition of the need to anticipate and manage them not only stimulated new tools, such as risk analysis, but also a new consciousness. The contemporary era, whatever one’s preferred sociological label, is replete with risks of a scale and magnitude unknown to history. Looming large for the global community is a variety of highly dreaded risks: risks of the detonation of nuclear weapons, risks of expanding the holes in the ozone layer protecting us, risks of global warming, risks of new knowledge (e.g., cloning and bionanotechnology), risks of bringing more species to extinction while creating new species, risks of terrorism, risks of both natural and technological disasters, and perhaps the ultimate risk, that of over exploiting nature’s capital. These and myriad other contemporary risks reflect the new consciousness as well as provide grist as natural for the sociological mill as one would hope to find.

Despite the promising grist, sociology was slow to recognize the pervasiveness of risk in daily human choices or in major decision challenges for society as a whole. Early beginnings to process the grist can be found in the 1940s, with sociological work on natural disasters. But, a focused sociological attention to risk did not occur until the mid-1980s, on the heels of America’s most serious nuclear mishap at the Three Mile Island facility in Pennsylvania in March 1979 (Freudenburg and Rosa 1984; Perrow [1984] 1999; Short 1984). Since then, the topic has attracted steady, if sporadic, attention. In the United States, sociologists continue to investigate natural disasters (e.g., Stallings 1995) while adding social psychological (e.g., Rosa, Matsuda, and Kleinhesselink 2000), as well as organizational studies (e.g., Clarke 1989; Perrow [1984] 1999; Vaughan 1996). A focus of particular sociological attention has also been on the distribution of risks as a reflection of class and racial injustice (Albrecht 1995; Brown et al. 2003; Bullard 1994; Szasz and Mueser 1997).

European sociology also awoke to the importance of risk in the mid-1980s (see Rosa 2000 for a review of the principal theories). Appearing on the heels of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in the Ukraine in April of 1986

was the highly influential book by German theorist Ulrich Beck ([1986] 1992), *The Risk Society*. Stimulated by the Chernobyl accident, Beck did not simply reflect on the many risks of contemporary society but instead identified risk as the foundational strut of high modernity. Whereas in past society, the principal preoccupation was with the distribution of “goods,” the high modern era had reversed the order of concerns. For the contemporary society, the distribution of “bads” became its principal preoccupation; it is, therefore, aptly called the “risk society.”

Other European theorists rang in on the same general theme. Risk so dominated the structure and consciousness of this era that it must occupy a central role in theorizing society. Anthony Giddens (1990), in agreement with Beck, argues that the era of high modernity represents a sharp break with the past, due to the “manufactured” nature of risks and the threats of ecological crises. German Niklas Luhman (1982), a system theorist, argues that risk has come to dominate social systems because many of the features of society that were defined as danger and external to social systems (and beyond human control) have been internalized. With their increased internalization came the increased pressure to assess and manage them. Complementary arguments emphasize the increased vulnerability and fragility of human societies due to the risks that accompany the sophistication and spread of knowledge (Stehr 2001).

This chapter is designed to introduce a wider readership to the sociology of risk. The approach to meeting this goal is to cover key, selected issues in depth, rather than provide a broad coverage that would result in a veneer of the field. Our choice of substantive coverage stems from an emphasis on those risk topics most consonant with mainstream sociological concerns. The chapter begins with an explanation of the formalities of risk assessment, including a definition of risk and definitions of conventional terms in the field. Covered next is doubtless one of the most challenging issues with risk: how to integrate risk assessment (what’s our best guess of the likelihood of realizing a risk?) with public preferences and public policies for determining which risks are worth taking. Examined next is a risk topic that stems from mainstream sociological issues of inequality. Many risks reinforce racial, gender, and class injustices, providing the topic with another venue for exposing obdurate discriminations in American society. Next comes a discussion of social and political responses to the inadequacies of risk assessment, especially where there are efforts to trump citizen concerns with the quantitative results of formal assessments. Finally, sketched out are key gaps in the field and new directions in research.

## DEFINING RISK, RISK ASSESSMENT, RISK EVALUATION, AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The field of risk assessment is characterized by both consensus and conflict over terminology. This section contains

a brief discussion of basic risk terminology: Risk is defined; major components of risk assessment, risk evaluation, and risk management are presented; and the limitations of these formal techniques are outlined (see also Dietz, Frey, and Rosa 2002).

## **Risk Defined**

Most technical definitions emphasize the idea that risk is the product of the probability and adverse consequences for humans resulting from exposure to a hazard (Lowrance 1976:70–74). Adverse effects to human health include death, disease, and injury. Such effects can be either acute or chronic; acute refers to adverse effects that occur quickly, whereas chronic refers to adverse effects that occur over a long period of time. Hazards are environmental agents that have acute or chronic effects on human health, such as cigarettes, pesticides and other toxic agents, technology, events, and the like. Rosa (1998:28) provides a broader, more epistemologically grounded definition, whose breadth comprises both undesirable risks (such as those above) and desirable risks (e.g., BASE jumping), and whose defining features are independent of human perceptions. Risk is a situation or event where something of human value (including humans themselves) is at stake and where the outcome is uncertain.

## **Technical Risk Assessment, Evaluation, and Management**

In view of terminological controversies it is important to be clear about the meaning of the key, consensus components of the effort to assess, evaluate, and manage risk. Each component is briefly discussed in the following sections.

### *Risk Assessment*

Risk assessment is typically defined as the estimation of the probability and magnitude of adverse effects on humans resulting from exposure to a hazard. The U.S. National Research Council (1983) has identified four distinct steps in risk assessment: (1) hazard identification, (2) dose-response assessment, (3) exposure assessment, and (4) risk characterization.

Hazard identification is the process of establishing that a substance, technology, or event may adversely effect human health or result in death. Various techniques have been used in the identification of hazards, including epidemiologic and laboratory methods. Adverse consequences of interest may include traumatic injury, cancer and other chronic diseases, reproductive problems such as sterility or miscarriage, neurobehavioral problems, acute and chronic damage to specific organs of the body, birth defects, and, of course, premature death. The goal is to establish a causal link between exposure to a hazard and an adverse health effect or death.

Dose-response assessment seeks to determine the link between exposure magnitude and adverse health effects or death. This step often includes the determination of the extent to which various subpopulations experience different exposure levels and other factors that may affect response to the hazard. This step is essentially one of estimating the nature and magnitude of health effects for humans under different conditions of hazard exposure through the use of epidemiologic and animal studies.

Exposure assessment is typically understood as the determination of the nature and degree of human exposure to a hazard. The source, route, dose, frequency, duration, and timing of hazard exposure, as well as the types of population exposed to the hazard are the goals of exposure assessments.

Risk characterization is a summary of the information about the probability and magnitude of adverse consequences identified in the other three steps. Risk characterizations are quantitative estimates of the nature and degree of risk associated with hazard exposure and will often contain information on the uncertainty (such as error bounds on statistical data) associated with the risk estimate.

### *Risk Evaluation*

Risk evaluation is a determination of the acceptability of the risk. The process is often controversial because the determination of acceptable risk levels is value based, a political decision rather than a technical one, always involving normative considerations. Various methods have been developed to evaluate the acceptability of risks. Traditional techniques include risk-cost-benefit calculations, revealed preferences (risk actions people have taken), and expressed preferences (perceived seriousness of risks), among others. Each of these techniques is used, but it appears as if risk-cost-benefit calculations are used more often in the evaluation of risks.

Risk-cost-benefit analysis is based on the idea that the risks associated with a particular hazard are acceptable, if the economic or other benefits of the hazard outweigh the economic and other costs. Based on the logic of economic efficiency, this method has been criticized on a number of grounds, including the problems of assigning monetary value to human health and the inequitable distribution of most risks across populations (Ackerman and Heinzerling 2004).

The method of revealed preferences is based on the supposition that the risks of a new hazard are acceptable, if they do not exceed the risks of existing risk choices and practices that have similar benefits. Various analysts have developed risk estimates for existing hazards (such as smoking cigarettes; drinking alcohol; and traveling by plane, automobile, and bicycle) and recommend that inter-risk comparisons be used in the determination of the acceptability of new risks. This method has been subjected to numerous criticisms, including questions about the underlying social and political legitimacy of existing patterns of risk.

The method of expressed preferences refers to the elicitation of public preferences on the acceptability of identified risks. Surveys, laboratory studies, public hearings, and other elicitation techniques are often used to identify public preferences. The weakness of this method resides in layperson perceptions of risk that are not always well informed, and they are seldom stable across time (Slovic, Fischhoff, and Lichtenstein 1979).

### *Risk Management*

Risk management is the process of preventing, controlling, or mitigating risks that have been deemed unacceptable. Various strategies are used to control unacceptable risks, including direct regulation, indirect regulation, and alternatives to regulation (cf. Hadden 1986). Direct regulation refers to active intervention in the market by banning a hazard or reducing its risks to an acceptable level by establishing formal controls (e.g., laws and regulations) on the actual production and use of a hazard. Indirect regulation begins with the acceptance of the risks associated with a hazard, but then attempts to encourage prudent behavior by informing those at risk through the dissemination of information such as warning labels and other forms of risk communication. Alternatives to regulation include voluntary compliance with recommended practices for the production and use of a given hazard; incentives to enhance the safe production and use of a hazard; and protection of those at risk through such mechanisms as the market, courts, and insurance.

### **The Problem: Factual and Value Uncertainties**

A variety of factors hinder the determination of the precise probability and magnitude of the adverse consequences of hazard exposure. Further complicating the problem is the inherent uncertainty in probabilities (by definition a probability is a mathematical representation of uncertainty) or consequences, indeterminacy between cause and effect. For instance, identifying a causal relationship between exposure to a hazard and the development of disease is complicated by long latency periods. These periods may last years or decades in length; cancer, for example, may take 20–40 years to develop. Accurate exposure data seldom exist, so it is difficult to establish unequivocally causality and determine the nature of the dose-response relationship between hazardous agents and adverse health consequences. Distinguishing between the effects of a specific hazard and other causal agents also is a problem because of the existence of a staggering variety of hazardous agents in the environment (e.g., 70,000 by some estimates). Chronic diseases are multifaceted in origin, arising from behavioral and biological factors and other environmental factors, such as occupational exposure, making controlled estimates of the separate causes all but impossible. Compounding the problem is the lack of adequate information about the possible additive or

synergistic relationships between environmental agents. In many cases, it is difficult to find a control population that has not been exposed to the chemical or other type of hazard that is being tested. Existing risk analytic techniques are unable to deal adequately with all of these problems.

Methods used in the assessment of the adverse health consequences associated with various environmental agents may be based on tenuous assumptions. Results generated with such techniques, therefore, are open to alternative interpretations. Thus, evidence alone cannot lead to clear-cut regulatory or management guidance. This lack of clarity in interpretation plays a fundamental role in the connection between risk and inequality.

## **THE ALLOCATION OF RISKS AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY**

The process and form of formal risk assessment has often reinforced unequal distributions of risk. European risk theory (Beck [1986] 1992; Giddens 1990; Luhman 1982), by emphasizing global risks, such as the threat of nuclear accidents or the threat of global warming, and by theorizing risk around those universal threats, has flattened social structures. As a consequence issues associated with the unequal distribution of risk, congruent with other structural features of inequality, are theorized away (Freudenburg 2000). Yet unequal distribution of risk has, indeed, created undue burdens on racial minorities, women, people of lower economic status, and populations of developing nations. Risk analysis, too, generally fails to detect key social inequalities because it overlooks particular types of risk, makes inaccurate estimates of them, lacks objectivity in evaluating them, or does not have adequate policy. While ignored by European theory and by conventional risk assessment, North American researchers have found race, class, and gender as fertile ground for empirical research.

Inequitable risks are multiple. Since the 1980s researchers have pointed to the unequal distribution of environmental hazards with Native Americans (Hooks and Smith 2004), people of color, and the poor. They face a disproportionate measure of exposures such as buried munitions, more landfills, refineries, and other toxics (Bullard 1994). Debate has formed regarding the causal sequence between hazard proximity to minority communities. Some argue that noxious facilities are drawn to areas inhabited by unskilled populations who need jobs, while others claim that facilities are sited in neighborhoods without sufficient political clout to prevent them. In either case, the fact of differential, cumulative exposures is undisputed, and it has not been accounted for in risk analysis procedures.

Differential exposure means differences in health impacts (Aschengrau et al. 1996). Poor people and African Americans, for example, are more likely to contract a variety of cancers because of their exposure to environmental

toxics (Taylor, Repetti, and Seeman 1999). Inner city populations are also at much higher risk of experiencing asthma, the cause of which has been traced to, among other things, bus depots and truck routes in those areas (Friedman et al. 2001). Hazardous exposure to chemicals in the workplace also causes negative health outcomes (Schettler et al. 1999), particularly in industrial processes to which working class populations are predominately exposed. There is a long history of workers contesting these exposures, but employers more often than not can avoid blame. Industry has attempted to divert debates over workplace risks to arguments about genetic vulnerability, making the claim that certain people are more susceptible to exposures than others. However, this argument sidesteps the need for improved worker safety and leaves the exposed population subject to health risks (Draper 2000).

The exposure of racial, ethnic, and low-income communities to hazards does not end with dangerous materials, but includes natural hazards too. Examples of this are as distant as the 1886 Charleston, South Carolina, earthquake (Steinberg 2000) and as close as the Northridge quake in 1994 (Stallings 1995). Other examples include hurricanes, such as the three Category 5 hurricanes in 2006—Katrina, Rita, and Wilma—that devastated the city of New Orleans, the Gulf Coast, and the Caribbean rim.

Gender is another dimension where risk is unequally distributed. Because of both distinct biological traits and contrasting social contexts, women are more sensitive to certain types of risks than men. A growing body of research has demonstrated that women's health is disproportionately negatively affected by inaccurate assessments of carcinogenic chemicals. Such chemicals have been shown to increase breast cancer rates (Fishman 2000; Kasper and Ferguson 2000), endometriosis (a source of pelvic pain and infertility) (Capek 2000), and affect the health of fetuses in utero (Jacobson and Jacobson 1996).

Unequal distribution of risk has also been international in scope, with developing nations inordinately affected. Recently, this process has accelerated due to globalization. In the far-reaching process of globalization, capital has become increasingly mobile (Held et al. 1999), allowing transnational corporations (TNCs) to move operations to areas where high-risk industrial processes are allowed (Frey 2003; Rodrik 1997). Outsourcing of production to developing nations causes their populations to encounter its related toxic products and environmental threats—often for the first time. For example, debates about instituting the North American Free Trade Agreement addressed the possibility of polluting companies moving from the United States, where environmental and health regulations were more stringent, to Mexico where workers would not be as well protected, and point-source pollution would be less monitored (Frey 2003).

Air pollution, one form of point source, also affects health. Regulatory measures in many developing nations have not matched those of developed nations, resulting in higher levels of air pollution: 90 percent of deaths due to air

pollution take place in developing nations, mostly due to indoor fires for heating and cooking (Woodford 2002). One critical mechanism in the unequal distribution of globalization's impacts has been the difficulty of holding TNCs accountable to affected populations (Koenig-Archibugi 2004). Governments have faced increasing challenges in forcing corporations to report on risk-imposing activities and to levy fines on those that violate regulations. Collusion between Third World governmental officials, regulatory competition to promote foreign direct investment, weak democratic institutions, and even political subversion are common factors reducing the accountability of TNCs.

Arguably, transnational-level risks are more serious and more difficult to manage than domestic ones. They include a vast number of health, environmental, and economic processes such as carbon loads, stratospheric ozone depletion, generation of biocumulative chemicals, international trade regulations, transboundary pollution, and economic development. While these problems first affect local populations, many of them transcend national boundaries with global ramifications. For example, toxic chemicals that originated in North America and Europe have been found in the blood and breast milk of indigenous women in remote arctic areas causing developmental problems (Colborn, Dumanoski, and Myers 1997). These chemicals are now ubiquitous in the environment and it is virtually impossible to stop their transmission to multiple contexts. The development of transnational institutions and mechanisms to calculate and regulate such risks are still in their incipient stages.

## **SOCIAL RESPONSES TO THE INADEQUACIES OF RISK ASSESSMENT**

The role of the public in risk assessment and management has been an unshakable feature of risk policy (U.S. National Research Council 1993, 1996). Some have argued that scientists should play a dominant role in selecting risks to be evaluated and in conducting that evaluation. Corporations have depended on the professionalization of risk assessment resulting in the disenfranchisement of the general public on grounds that it is irrational, self-interested, and ignorant. Noting the influential role of corporations and other vested stakeholders, others have argued that scientists' claims to objectivity are invalid, and their values affect their evaluation of risk (Andrews 2000). Therefore, they conclude that the public should be directly involved in risk assessment. Advocacy groups and business often take different philosophical approaches to protection from risks as well (Dietz and Rycroft 1987). While the first often promotes a precautionary principle (where precaution is called for in the light of any evidence of harm), the latter pushes the need for absolute certainty before regulating potential hazards.

There are multiple sources of public distrust of risk assessment. Possibly, most important is the marginalization

of lay citizens in its construction. Debates about who should be involved in the science of risk assessment centers on whose knowledge is considered legitimate. Some (Fischer 2000) argue that politics of risk reflect politics of knowledge. Since risks are increasingly invisible to the naked eye and therefore require scientific substantiation, experts are required to assess them. Meanwhile, from time to time attentive citizens become increasingly skeptical of science and technology that has historically operated in a monopolistic manner, and that excludes democratic participation. This results in tension between those who possess expert knowledge and lay citizens. German theorist Ulrich Beck ([1986] 1992) points to this disjuncture as the major fault line of the “risk society.”

The debate over public involvement in the entire process of dealing with risk—risk identification, assessment, and management—has evolved beyond the polarization of the past (Stern and Fineberg 1996). The analytic-deliberative process (A-D) proposed by the National Academies of Science has struck a responsive chord among policymakers and the risk community resulting in its rapid growth in public policy decisions. Governments and transnational institutions have taken a more participatory approach to risk and are beginning to include the public as an important part of the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the development of such institutions has been slow and painstaking, and the ultimate success of A-D confronts a number of barriers.

There are still few institutional mechanisms that adequately engage the public in the process of risk assessment. In the past, a “deficit model” prevailed where interface with citizens consists of educating them about risk-based decision making. An emphasis on risk communication rested on the assumption that citizens’ perceptions should be brought in line with that of experts, not that citizens should have an equal say in which risks should be assessed and how, and who should judge their acceptability.

Historically, the most direct method of citizen franchisement is the activities of organized citizen groups or of social movements. Tesh (2000) and other scholars have discussed the role that social movements and citizen groups play in changing how risk is constructed. Citizens have often organized locally or as members of social movements in response to the failures of risk assessment. Labor movements, women’s movements, environmentalists, and other citizens groups have contested the accuracy of risk assessment and the acceptability of consequences, often asserting that risks are too high to be acceptable. New social movement frames have emerged to reconceptualize risk in more equitable ways. For example, environmental justice activists emphasize the unfair distribution of consequences as a basis for reducing exposure to environmental hazards by minority groups (Bullard 1993, 1994).

Environmental movements, too, serve as watchdog groups, especially in developing nations, where transnational networks (Frey 2003; Keck and Sikkink 1998) have emerged in response to disempowerment of citizens. These

groups attempt to import transnational norms developed in democratic states about participation, environmentalism, and equality (Khagram et al. 2000) to protect threatened populations and reduce the impacts of globalization. In the absence of institutionalized democracies or social welfare policies, these groups work to protect poor and disempowered people from the practices of transnational corporations. The disempowered face increasing risks in the work setting, experience displacement, environmental degradation, and community disintegration as a result of increased corporate activities in their areas. However, as these and other risks increase, citizens and their watchdogs demand greater direct involvement in risk policy and greater governmental assurance and protection (Rodrik 1997).

Many social movement groups point to the powerful role that corporate stakeholders play in risk assessment. Tierney (1999) states that “the risk analysis field, by its very structure and organization, has an especially close affinity with the interests of the federal government and major industries” (p. 224). The federal government employs one-fourth of risk professionals and 18 percent work for corporations. Industry also influences risk research (Dietz and Rycroft 1987). Fischhoff (1996) argues that the sponsor of research shapes findings in its favor in a number of ways, by soliciting certain types of proposals, by reducing funding for labs that find unfavorable results, and by establishing reporting requirements. Industry has often undermined accurate representations of risk assessment by withholding scientific evidence. The most pronounced example of this practice is the case of “big tobacco” that withheld knowledge that cigarettes were addictive with negative health outcomes and which led the way to defining unwanted scientific findings as “junk science” (Mooney 2005). A similar instance occurred with lead. Paint manufacturers continued to use it in their products long beyond the time when there was sufficient data supporting a link between lead and a variety of health problems (Markowitz and Rosner 2002).

## CONCLUSIONS

We have attempted to highlight and underscore the centrality of risk to contemporary society, manifest in a new consciousness and in new scientific and management tools for dealing with risk. The pervasiveness of that consciousness has attracted sociological attention across framing domains: macro theory (almost exclusively a European preoccupation), meso theory and analyses (e.g., organization theory and inequalities), and micro studies (such as the shaping of risk perceptions by culture or social position). The institutionalization of risk assessment and management practices and their pivotal role in public policy at all levels of government not only underscores the pervasive, new consciousness, but also opens a space of challenge and opportunity. For contemporary societies, especially those who must manage complex technologies,

a key challenge is how to perform risks assessments that take into account the obdurate inequalities in society. A key opportunity lies in the development and application of policy that extends the domain of participation, thereby franchising social groups previously excluded from the policy process.

### **Major Gaps and New Directions**

There are arresting and challenging gaps in our sociological knowledge about risk across theoretical and framing domains. Key gaps at the macro level comprise both conceptual and empirical issues. Conceptually, there is the need to develop the scope conditions that permit complementary theorizing about global and local risks within a common theoretical framework. Success at this task would lead to an even more challenging question: To what extent do such frames sweep away venerable sociological visions of social structure? Owing to the source of risk theories, a European tradition deeply influenced by a Continental approach to theory as broad interpretation, we know of no successful attempts to harness macro risk theory to operational hypotheses and empirical tests. The appropriate direction here should be ostensibly clear—and also intimidating due to the formidability of the challenge.

Because the principal decision makers in contemporary society, in power and numbers, are organizations, there is a deep gap in our understanding of how organizations perceive, anticipate, prepare, and respond to risk. This need applies not only to organizational dynamics in a single setting (e.g., Vaughan 1996) but especially to interorganizational, and infrastructural dynamics, such as the Y2K risk at the turn of the millennium (Perrow 1999).

A variety of important gaps remain in microanalyses of risk. The most fundamental one is the question over the respective balance between biology and culture in how

ordinary people think about risk. While the cumulative sociological work addresses this question in part, and while there is considerable growth in our knowledge of this issue, there remains a pivotal need to fine-tune our understanding of this pivotal issue. Another issue is the lack of a compelling theoretical explanation for the persistent gap in risk perceptions between men and women. Why, for almost any risk, do women perceive the risk to be more serious than men? A final gap, with deep psychological and political implications, is the risks of terrorism (Clarke 2005). There is much yet to learn about the thoughts of terrorists, how they deal with their risks, and by what mechanisms they are recruited to perform acts of ultimate self-sacrifice. There is also the question, which overlaps with organizational analysis, of how terrorist networks are created, how they communicate, and how they plan and execute terrorist actions.

The biggest gap of all falls into none of the three sociological domains of inquiry discussed above, but subsumes them all. The technical and social scientific field of risk, having become sufficiently specialized, can be characterized as a loosely coupled network of knowledge domains. Communication and cross-fertilization across specialties is limited and unsystematic. Hence, the challenge here is obvious, although the solution may not be; there is a need to develop mechanisms not for connecting dots but for connecting knowledge domains so that knowledge in one domain may be put in service to others.

Taken together, the selected gaps discussed here, along with suggestions for conducting research to address them, should reawaken us to the centrality of risk to the functions and operations of all societies. Once again, therefore, we find a vast quantity of grist for the sociological mill. The remaining issue, then, is to maintain sociology's eye on the grains of understanding waiting the thoughtful grinding of that grist.

## PART II

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### THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE SELF



# THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY

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## LOCATING THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY

The body is a contested and problematic feature of modern societies, giving rise to the view that we live in a “somatic society” (Turner 1992). The political and cultural complexity of the modern notion of the body is a product of changes in the medical and biological sciences and their application to, for example, human reproduction. It is also a consequence of social movements such as feminism and environmentalism. The result is that many of the most pressing moral problems of the modern world are related to changes in the nature of human embodiment. With stem cell research, it has been claimed that in principle we can live “forever.” In addition, in advanced societies, women in old age can claim an unlimited right to reproduce through assisted reproduction. With the use of drugs (or, metaphorically speaking, “mental steroids”) to enhance brain cells, it is theoretically possible to manufacture an intellectual elite. These are some of the pressing political and ethical issues relating to the human body that modern society needs to address.

The sociology of the body is a product of this emerging social complexity. Research on the body is, of course, not necessarily new in the social sciences. There is a well-established anthropological tradition of research on dance, tattooing, body symbolism, and somatic classification schemes from the work of Marcel Mauss to Mary Douglas (Blacking 1977). Anthropologists have contributed in particular to the analysis of body decoration (Caplan 2000) and to the study of healing and trance in relation to body states (Strathern 1996). The research of Douglas (1966) on

the classification of pollution and taboo through metaphorical references to apertures in the human body—what goes into man does not defile him, but what comes out does—remains the classical text on the categorization of danger. However, the *sociology of the body* is a relatively recent development, largely emerging in British sociology at the beginning of the 1980s (Turner 1984). Sociological studies of the body originally examined the impact of consumerism on the representation of the body in urban societies (Featherstone 1982): gender differentiation through bodily practices and the “mask of ageing” (Featherstone and Hepworth 1991). The journal *Body & Society* was founded in 1995. This research interest was initially confined to British sociology (Featherstone, Hepworth, and Turner 1991; Shilling 1993), but there has also been an expanding interest in Canada with *Five Bodies* (O’Neill 1985), in France with *Le gouvernement des corps* (Fassin and Memmi 2004), and in Germany with *Soziologie des Körpers* (Gugutzer 2004). The study of the body has also become increasingly multidisciplinary as a topic, and major contributions have come from history, religious studies, and archeology. In this context, one can refer to influential works such as Richard Sennett’s *Flesh and Stone* (1994), Thomas Laqueur’s (1990) *Making Sex* (1990), and J. J. Brumberg’s *Fasting Girls* (1988).

One can find earlier historical roots of the study of the body in various strands of sociology, as illustrated by Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Stigma* (1964) and by Norbert Elias on the civilizing process (1978). However, the study of the body has drawn on a heterogeneous range of theoretical sources from Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* (1979), and

through the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967), it has included the philosophical anthropology of Arnold Gehlen (1980). It is also possible to identify an intellectual history that goes back eventually to Karl Marx's Paris manuscripts, in which he developed the notions of *praxis*, species-being, technology, and alienation, which were subsequently influential in critical theories. It is also important to recognize that sociology has drawn significantly from modern philosophy. At least one linking theme here is the impact of Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and broadly, "continental philosophy" in terms of the creation of a social ontology. Finally, the sociology of the body can be seen as an aspect of a broader philosophical criticism of the legacy of Cartesian rationalism by the Frankfurt School, existentialism, and Heideggerian ontology (Staught and Turner 1988).

In simple terms, the sociology of the body involves the study of the embodied nature of social action and exchange; the cultural representations of the human body; the social nature of performance in dance, games, sport, and so forth; and the reproduction of the body in the social structure. In intellectual terms, the sociology of the body is an attempt to offer a sociological reflection on the separation of mind and body, which has been characteristic of Western philosophy since the time of René Descartes (1591–1650). Recent research has often been significantly influenced by feminism, cultural anthropology, and post-modern social theory, and hence sociologists have been concerned to understand how the naturalness of the body is socially constructed as a social fact. For example, sociologists have questioned the notion that right-handedness is produced by left- and right-sidedness in the brain by arguing that the superiority of right-sidedness in human societies is a cultural convention that is reinforced by socialization. As a result, the sociology of the body has had a critical edge in disability studies and radical feminism, where activists have used sociology to deconstruct the dominant, hegemonic interpretation of the body as an unchanging aspect of nature. In contrast, it is asserted that the body is constructed to support dominant relations of power and authority. In a postorthodox intellectual setting, the sociology of the body shades off into queer theory, lesbian and gay studies, film theory, dance studies, radical feminism, and postmodernism (Halberstam and Livingston 1995).

### Conceptual Distinctions

It is important to establish some guidelines to terminology. In recent studies of the body, it has become commonplace to distinguish between the body and embodiment. The former refers to cultural analyses of how the body is represented in society and how it functions as a symbolic system. For example, the body of the king was often taken to be a symbolic representation of the sovereignty of the state, and in contrast, the study of courtly rituals might focus on embodiment, such as the actual bodily practices

of court officials around the monarch. This distinction between symbolic cultures and performance has become a significant division in sociology, where it is also associated with the division between various forms of structuralism, on the one hand, and phenomenology, on the other. Another important distinction in recent debate has been with respect to the relative merits of developing the body as a generic theme of sociology (an embodied or corporeal sociology) versus the emergence of a specific subfield (comparable with the sociology of the family, for example), namely, the sociology of the body. No consensus has emerged on the analytical resolution of these issues.

### THEORETICAL APPROACHES

One can identify four major theoretical traditions in the sociology of the body. The first demonstrates that the body is not a natural phenomenon but a social construct. The second perspective explores how the body is a representation of the social relations of power. In the third orientation, sociology examines the phenomenology of the "lived body"—that is, the experience of embodiment in the everyday world. Finally, sociology, much influenced by anthropology, looks at bodily performance of acquired practices or techniques.

#### Social Constructionism

The notion that the body is socially constructed has been the dominant perspective in modern sociology, and it is closely associated with social movements that typically employ constructionism as a critical tool to deny that the body is simply a natural object (Radley 1995). For example, feminist theory has examined the social construction of the body and rejected the notion of an essential or natural body. For instance, Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1972) argued famously that women are not born but become women through social and psychological processes that construct them as essentially female. Her work inaugurated a research tradition that concentrates on the social production of differences in gender and sexuality. The basic contribution of feminist theories of the body has been to social constructionism—that is, to the explanation that the differences between male and female bodies, which in the everyday world we take for granted as if they were facts of nature, are socially produced. Feminism in the 1970s was ideologically important in establishing the difference between biologically determined sex and the social construction of gender roles and sexual identities. Empirical research has subsequently explored how the social and political subordination of women is expressed in psychological conditions such as depression and physical illness. Creative research in medical sociology examined anorexia nervosa, obesity, and eating disorders—for instance, Susan Bordo's *Unbearable*

Weight (1993). There have also been important historical studies of anorexia (Brumberg 1988), while the popular literature was influenced by Susan Orbach's (1985) *Fat Is a Feminist Issue*.

Research on the body in popular culture has explored how women's bodies are literally constructed as consumer objects, and sociologists have become interested consequently in the social implications of cosmetic surgery (Davis 2002; Negrin 2002). Cosmetic surgery involves the actual reconstruction of the "natural" body to produce social—that is, aesthetic—effects. While aesthetic surgery is becoming routine, the negative consequences of cosmetic surgery have come to public attention through sensational cases such as the death of Lolo Ferrari, whose eighteen operations created what were reputed to be the largest female breasts in the world with a 54G cup (Shepherd 2004). There are other celebrity cases, such as that of Jocelyne Wildenstein, who has shaped her face to look like a leopard (Pitts 2003). Orlan's surgical performances are designed to challenge the alliance between medicine, market, and aesthetics in a consumer society where the human (typically, female) body is being simultaneously physically and socially reconstructed (Clarke 1999). More recently, the notion of the constructed body has become especially significant in political advocacy by disability groups. Influenced by sociological theory, disability activists argue that "disability" is not physical impairment but a loss of social rights (Barnes, Mercer, and Shakespeare 1999).

Within this constructionist perspective, there has also been considerable interest in the social implications of machine-body fusions, or cyborgs (Featherstone and Burrows 1995). For example, there has long been a strong association between technology and masculinity. In popular culture, *Robocop* was at one stage the ultimate cyborg, the merging of machine and organism, but he also illustrated very traditional gender themes about power and sexuality. The technology of *Robocop* now looks antiquated by comparison with the more sophisticated computerized world of *Terminator*, *Star Wars*, and *Matrix*. However, this *homo faber* perspective remains a vivid myth that conceptualizes Man as the maker and builder, whose hands are potent tools. This pervasive urban myth elevates a particular form of masculinity and denies the potential of alternative relations between the body and technology. In recent years, however, feminists have begun to confront the conventional relationship between women and technology and to explore not only the potential benefits for women of reproductive technologies but also the reproductive and emancipatory implications of new technologies (Haraway 1991). The new information technology and the potential of virtual reality and cyberspace all attracted great interest. Computer simulations and networks create the possibilities of new experiences of disembodiment, re-embodiment, and emotional attachment. All this threatens to transform conventional assumptions about the nature of social relationships.

Technological construction, as an implicit framework, can also be said to include the political statements of performance artists like Stelarc and Orlan. Through a series of artistic performances, Stelarc explored the interconnections between the body, technology, and the environment to promote the idea of the end of the body as a natural phenomenon (Fleming 2002). In the case of Orlan, the surgical reconstructions of her face are intended to be performances in which she ironically questions the transformation of women's bodies by cosmetics and cosmetic surgery. By transforming surgery into a public drama, she critically explores the exploitative relationships between cosmetics, medical practice, and gender stereotypes. She is literally showing how medical technology can socially reconstruct her body. Here, we see the body being used as a site on which a performance occurs that delivers a powerful political statement. Although this technological dimension is an underdeveloped aspect of social constructionism, one should include it here to make a contrast with more deterministic models of the cultural production of the body. Orlan's surgery ironically displays the power of medical technology while also calling technology into question as part of the economic apparatus of a consumer society.

## Cultural Representation

Within a cultural perspective, the body is often described as a cultural representation of social organization and power relations. This approach has been a common aspect of historical research, art criticism, and social anthropology. The human body has been a potent and persistent metaphor for social and political relations throughout human history. Different parts of the body have historically represented different social functions. For example, we can refer to the "head of state" without really recognizing the metaphor, while the heart has been a rich source of ideas about life, imagination, and emotions. It is the house of the soul and the book of life, and the "tables of the heart" provided a perspective into the whole of Nature. Similarly, the hand occupies an important position in shaping the imagination with respect to things that are beautiful (handsome) or useful (handy) or damaged and incomplete (handicap). For example, left-handedness represents things and relationships that are sinister (Hertz 1960). Following the work of Foucault, historical research has demonstrated how representations of the body are the result of relations of power, particularly between men and women. One classic illustration is the historical argument that anatomical maps of the human body vary between societies in terms of the dominant discourse of gender (Petersen 1998).

Sociologists have shown how disturbances are typically grasped in the metaphors by which we understand mental and physical health. Body metaphors have been important in moral debate about these social disruptions. The division between good and evil has drawn heavily on bodily

metaphors; what is sinister is related to left-handedness, the illegitimate side, the awkward side. Our sense of social order is spoken of in terms of the balance or imbalance of the body. In the eighteenth century, when physicians turned to mathematics to produce a Newtonian picture of the body, the metaphor of hydraulic pumps was used to express human digestion and blood circulation. The therapeutic bleeding of patients by knife or leech was to assist this hydraulic mechanism and to relieve morbid pressures on the mind. Severe disturbances in society were often imagined as poor social digestion. These assumptions about social unrest producing disorder in the gut are reflected in the basic idea of the need for a government of the body. Dietary management of the body was translated into fiscal constraint, reduction in government expenditure, and downsizing of public institutions. In the language of modern management science, a lean and mean corporation requires a vibrant management team. In neoliberal ideology, central government is an excess—a form of political flatulence.

### Phenomenological Perspective

The concept of the “lived body” was developed by the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1982) in his *Phenomenology of Perception*. In developing the phenomenology of the everyday world, he was concerned to understand human consciousness, perception, and intentionality. His work was original in applying Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology to intentional consciousness to everyday phenomena but from the perspective of corporeal existence. He wanted to describe the lived world without the use of the conventional dualism between subject and object. Hence, Merleau-Ponty was critical of the legacy of Descartes’s *cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”), which had established the dualism between mind and body. Merleau-Ponty developed the idea of the “body-subject” that is always situated in a specific space within a determinate social reality. Rejecting behavioral and mechanistic approaches, he claimed that the body is central to our being in the world. Perception cannot be treated as merely a disembodied consciousness. Research inspired by this idea of the lived body and lived experience has been important in demonstrating the intimate and necessary connections between body, experience, and identity. Studies of traumatic experiences relating to disease or accident have shown how damage to the physical body transforms the self and how sharing narratives can be important in sustaining an adequate sense of self-worth (Becker 1997). This phenomenological perspective on the body has consequently been important in medical sociology, especially in research dealing with pain and discomfort. Research on violence and torture has also drawn on the sociology of the body to understand how the everyday environment (of tools and domestic appliances) can be used to undermine the ontological security of people (Scarry 1985; Turner 2003).

### Bodily Practices

Finally, we can also examine how human beings are embodied and how people learn corporeal practices that are necessary for walking, dancing, shaking hands, and so on. Social anthropologists have been influenced in particular by Marcel Mauss (1979), who invented the concept of “body techniques” to describe how people learn to manage their bodies according to social norms. Children, for instance, have to learn how to sit properly at table and boys learn how to throw in ways that differentiate them from girls. This anthropological legacy suggests that we can think about the body as an ensemble of practices. These Maussian assumptions have been developed by Pierre Bourdieu in terms of two influential concepts. *Hexis* refers to the deportment (gait, gesture, or posture) by which people carry themselves. *Habitus* refers to the dispositions through which taste is expressed. It is the habitual way of doing things. Bourdieu (1984) has employed these terms to study the everyday habitus of social classes in *Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. The body is invested with symbolic capital whereby it is a corporeal expression of the hierarchies of social power. The body is permanently cultivated and represented by the aesthetic preferences of different social classes, whereby in French culture, mountaineering and tennis require the flexible, slim, and pliant bodies of the middle and upper classes, whereas the working-class sports of wrestling produce an entirely different body and habitus. Bourdieu’s work is important because it has identified the significance of performance in his notions of practice, cultural capital, and hexis, and his approach has been influential in studies of habitus from boxing (Wacquant 1995) to classical ballet (Turner and Wainwright 2003).

Empirical work inspired by Bourdieu is currently the most promising framework for the development of sociological perspectives. One neglected area in sociology however is performance. For example, to study ballet as performance rather than as representation, sociologists need to pay close attention to the performing body. Richard Shusterman in *Performing Live* (2000), drawing on the work of Bourdieu and developing a pragmatist aesthetics, has argued that an aesthetic understanding of a performance such as hip hop cannot neglect the embodied features of artistic activity. An understanding of embodiment and lived experience is crucial in comprehending performing arts and also for the study of the body in sport. While choreography is in one sense the defining text of the dance, performance takes place outside the strict directions of the choreographic work and analysis. Dance as performance has an aesthetic immediacy, which cannot be captured by disembodied discourse analysis. It is important to recapture the intellectual contribution of the phenomenology of human embodiment in order to avoid the unwarranted reduction of bodies to cultural texts. Dance is a theoretically challenging topic because it demonstrates the analytical limitations of cultural interpretations of the body

as text, but dance studies are also an interesting field because they demonstrate the important connections between state formation, national culture, and globalization (Archetti 2003).

Whereas the work of Foucault was probably the most important influence on the study of the body in the 1980s, Bourdieu's intellectual legacy has become one of the most influential foundations for the development of the sociology of the body in the 1990s and later (Wacquant 2004). Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984) played an important role in the evolution of work on class, style, and body, but sociology has yet to incorporate fully the insights of his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *Pascalian Meditations* (2000) for an understanding of performance and reflexive embodiment.

We can simplify this fourfold map of theoretical traditions by reducing this complexity to two fundamental, but distinctive, theoretical options: (1) the cultural decoding of the body as a system of meaning that has a definite structure existing separately from the intentions and conceptions of individuals or (2) the phenomenological study of embodiment, which attempts to understand human practices that are organized around the life course (birth, maturation, reproduction, and death). The work of Bourdieu offers one possible solution to these stubborn tensions between meaning and experience, between representation and practice, and between structure and agency. Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, practice, and bodily knowledge provide research strategies for looking simultaneously at how status difference is inscribed on the body and how we experience the world through our bodies, which are ranked in terms of their cultural capital. This reconciliation of these traditions can be assisted by distinguishing between the idea of the body as representation and embodiment as practice and experience. These theoretical conflicts between representation and practice can be resolved by arguing that "the body" is a cultural system in which bodies are considered as carriers of powerful symbolic realities and "embodiment" as the practices that are necessary to function in the everyday world (Turner and Rojek 2001).

## **TOWARD A NEW AGENDA: REPRODUCTION AND LONGEVITY**

The sociology of the body has a promising and important future, but it is also in danger of becoming repetitive rather than innovative. One possible research agenda for this subfield is to consider the transformation of the body by modern science and technology. In this section, let us consider reproductive technologies and the new social gerontology (Turner 2000, 2004). This account of the sociology of the body has been particularly influenced by the social philosophy of Foucault. His perspective is useful because he described a division between the study of the individual body and the study of populations (Foucault 1979). In the first distinction,

which he referred to as "an anatomo-politics of the human body" (p. 139), Foucault examined how various forms of bodily discipline have regulated individuals. In the second distinction, which he referred to as "a bio-politics of the population" (p. 139), Foucault studied the regulatory controls of the state over populations. Anatomo-politics is concerned with the micropolitics of identity and concentrates on the sexuality, reproduction, and life histories of individuals. For instance, the clinical inspection of individuals is part of the anatomo-politics of society. The biopolitics of populations uses demography and epidemiology to examine and manage whole populations. The anatomo-politics of medicine involves the discipline of individuals, whereas the biopolitics of society achieves a surveillance and regulation of populations. Foucault's study of the body was thus organized around the notions of state power, body discipline, and regulatory controls or "governmentality."

Foucault's paradigm is helpful in understanding developments in contemporary biological sciences and their application to individuals and populations. The social consequences of cloning, genetics, and new reproductive technologies will be revolutionary, and the conflicts that will emerge in policy formation, politics, morality, and law from the new biology will be profound. There is an important area of comparative and legal research on government responses to genetic research and patent policy that raises the question about the legal ownership of the human body in modern societies. This question has already become significant in the field of organ transplants and reproduction, and these debates will become more extensive as new medical procedures become technically possible and economically feasible. The fundamental problem is the changing relationship between the self, body, and society. Medical technology and microbiology hold out the promise (through the Human Genome Project, cloning, transplants, "wonder drugs," and microsurgery) of human freedom from aging, disability, and disease. These medical possibilities have given rise to utopian visions of a world wholly free from disease—a new mirage of health. It is clear that the human body will come to stand in an entirely new relationship to self and society as a result of these technological developments. These medical changes will have major consequences for family life, reproduction, work, and aging. These social changes raise important issues for the ownership and use of the human body. For example, we might assume that in a liberal society, people should be free to sell parts of their bodies for commercial gain. While we might believe that, for example, selling one's hair for commercial gain would be trivial, selling a kidney is clearly more serious. These changes create further opportunities for the development of a global medical system of governance in which medicine may exercise an expanded power over life and death. Few national governments have yet attempted to regulate this global medical system through legislation.

The new biotechnology implicitly involves the emergence of a new eugenics. Biotechnology is forcing modern states to develop eugenics policies that will address the

new challenges of asexual reproduction. At one level, eugenics can be defined as simply any human strategy to improve reproduction. The term *eu-genesis*, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, refers to “the quality of breeding well and freely,” while *eugenic* or “the production of fine offspring” appeared first in 1833. The eugenics of the 1930s, which was associated with authoritarian regimes, has been widely condemned as an evil attack on individual dignity. We might say that if fascist eugenics involved compulsory state policies, postwar eugenics was individualistic and discretionary. However, any policy that influences reproduction can be described as “eugenic.” For example, handing out free contraceptives or giving contraceptive advice to schoolchildren is a eugenic practice. Fascist eugenics, which was couched within a specific ideology of racial purity, was a policy of public regulation of breeding, and in modern times, the one-child-family policy of the Chinese government has been the most draconian policy of population control. In contrast, most liberal societies have regarded reproduction as a private issue in which the state and the law should not interfere.

However, new reproductive technologies have major consequences for the public domain, and in general, the new biotechnology holds out the prospect of a posthuman future; therefore, eugenics can no longer be left entirely to individuals making private decisions about their reproductive careers and the biological futures of their children (Cohen 2002). Because the sex act is still regarded as a private choice, states and their legislatures have been reluctant to regard reproductive activity as a public concern. States have in the past attempted to control, for example, the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among the military and have waged educational campaigns to promote the use of condoms, but democratic states have been reluctant to control directly the spread of AIDS through, for example, the use of criminal law. The separation of private sex acts from reproduction by technology does complicate the legal issue. There are few contemporary societies in which individuals (heterosexual, gay, or lesbian) have an unlimited right to reproduce by whatever technological means available regardless of the future implications for identities and social relationships. Nevertheless, reproductive technology has advanced rapidly, and in principle, we can expect these technologies to change the conditions in which reproduction takes place. The social implications of these medical developments are disturbing because we have neither convincing answers to pressing moral questions nor the institutional apparatus to enforce whatever answers we might eventually agree are appropriate.

### Immortal Bodies

In conventional gerontology, the question about living forever might in practice mean living a full life in terms of achieving the average expectation of life by class and gender. More recently, however, there has been considerable speculation as to whether medical science could reverse

the aging process. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the conventional view of mainstream biology was that normal cells had a “replicative senescence”—that is, normal tissues can divide only a finite number of times before entering a stage of quiescence. Cells were observed in vitro in a process of natural senescence, but eventually experiments in vivo produced a distinction between normal and pathological cells in terms of division. Paradoxically, pathological cells appeared to have no necessary limitation on replication, and “immortalization” was the defining characteristic of a pathological cell line. Biologists concluded by extrapolation that finite cell division meant that the aging of the whole organism was inescapable. These research findings confirmed the conventional view that human life had an intrinsic and predetermined limit, and that it was pathology that described how certain cells might outsurvive the senescence of cellular life.

This framework of aging was eventually overturned by the discovery that isolated human embryonic cells were capable of continuous division in culture and showed no necessary sign of a replicative crisis. Certain nonpathological cells, or stem cells, were capable of indefinite division and hence were “immortalized.” The cultivation of these cells as an experimental form of life has challenged existing assumptions about the boundaries between the normal and the pathological and between life and death. Stem cell research has transformed our understanding of the body and the life cycle by developing reserves of renewable tissue, and this research suggests that the limits of biological growth are neither fixed nor inflexible. The body has a surplus of stem cells capable of survival beyond the death of the organism itself. With these developments in biogerontology, the capacity of regenerative medicine to expand the limits of life becomes a feasible aspect of modern medicine. This interpretation of replication locates aging as a shifting threshold between surplus and waste, between obsolescence and renewal, and between decay and immortality.

Because traditional economics interprets the aging of the populations of the developed world as a threat to continued economic growth, there is much interest in the possibilities of stem cell research as a feature of regenerative medicine. Commercial companies operating in the Caribbean are already offering regenerative medicine as part of a tourist package, designed to alleviate the undesirable consequences of degenerative diseases such as multiple sclerosis or diabetes. The idea of biological tourism might become an addendum to sexual tourism in the world of advanced biocapitalism. One sign of these unfolding medical possibilities was an academic event hosted by the Cambridge University Life Extension and Rejuvenation Society in October 2004, in which it was announced that human beings could live forever. It was claimed that within the next 25 years medical science will possess the capacity to repair all known effects of aging. The average age at death of people born thereafter would exceed 5,000 years! In fact, expectations of significant breakthroughs in the

treatment of disease and significant profits by the large pharmaceutical companies after the decoding of the human genome in 2001 ended in disappointment. The pharmaceutical industry has become reluctant to invest in new products designed for conditions that affect only small numbers of people. However, the fears associated with “personalized medicine” have begun to disappear because it is now obvious that there are generic processes from which the “genomics” companies can profit. Genetics-based medicine is poised to find better diagnostic tests for and generic solutions to conditions such as diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, heart problems, and breast cancer. These scientific advances will radically enhance life expectancy.

## THE BODY, SELF, AND SOCIETY

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Reproductive technology and new patterns of aging are relevant to the sociology of the body because these examples point to an important field of research—namely, the relationship between embodiment, selfhood, and social relations. New technologies suggest that humans might acquire different bodies and have to develop different ways of relating to and thinking about the body. Heart transplants already suggest that this type of radical surgery forces people to rethink their relationship to the inside of their bodies. In short, these areas of research are relevant to the sociology of the body because they give rise in a new way to the traditional debate about the relationship between the body, self, and society. In fact, these three concepts can be broadly regarded as defining the intellectual field occupied by sociology.

In an important study of theories of the self, Jerrold Seigel (2005) developed a useful model of how societies have conducted a philosophical conversation about the self. There are three basic components of the self. The most important is reflection. To be a self, we must be able to reflect on our identities, our actions and our relationship with others. We must have consciousness, language, and memory. Selfhood, whatever else it involves, must involve a capacity for continuous self-assessment and oversight of behavior. Second, the self is not an independent, free-floating form of consciousness because the self is also defined by its relationship to human embodiment. Recognition of the self depends not just on memory and consciousness but also on its peculiar physical characteristics. We can certainly reflect on our bodies as objects, but my hand does not have the same type of objectivity as the hammer it holds. In short, while the conscious self is a reflective agent, the body is not just an object among other objects but participates in an embodied subjectivity toward the everyday world. The final dimension is the notion of the self as a product of or situated within social interaction. The Western self has not been invariably captured in the romantic but isolated figure of Robinson Crusoe, but it has been interpreted as a social phenomenon that cannot survive without a social world. We are embedded in social

networks. Seigel’s argument is that while specific aspects of the self are typically emphasized by philosophers, theories of the self have in practice to address all three aspects.

Sociology has traditionally defined the self as simply the product of social processes (socialization) and social relationships (the looking-glass self). Émile Durkheim’s (1974) “Individual and Collective Representations” is the classical representative of this tradition, but the idea of social determinism was reinforced in Goffman’s (1959) *The Presentation of the Self*, where the self merely learns a script that has to be delivered within a dramaturgical setting. But this is a superficial and misleading interpretation. Like the Western tradition as a whole, sociology has struggled conceptually with the contradictions between social action, social structure, and the reflective self. The “solutions” to the quandary are numerous, but sociologists of the body have argued that any solution to the structure and agency dilemma must take into consideration the embodiment of the reflective self.

There is, however, from the perspective of historical sociology, a more interesting way of interpreting Seigel’s theoretical framework. We might plausibly argue that the reflective self was a dominant theme in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a consequence of the Enlightenment following Kant’s challenge to throw off infantile tutelage. At a later stage, the Romantic reaction placed greater emphasis on personality, subjectivity, and embodiment against the world of Kantian cognitive rationalism. The rise of the concept of “the social” took place with the growth of industrial society, and this development also paved the way for the sociological view that the individual is merely a product of social forces. The image of the passive self dominated the middle of the twentieth century and was articulated in sociological theories of mass society, the managerial revolution, and the “organization man.” The individual became passive rather than reflective and active. Finally, the rise of the corporeal self is the dominant paradigm of somatic society, because the scientific revolutions in information science, microbiology, and genetics have provided us with a language of genetic determinism in which both the social and the reflective selves are subordinate. Popular notions such as the “criminal gene” mean that we can avoid any recognition of individual reflexivity and responsibility. Individuals are believed to be driven by whatever bundle of genes they have fortuitously inherited from their parents.

## PROSPECTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

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Since about 1984, a variety of perspectives on the body have emerged. It is unlikely and possibly undesirable that any single theoretical synthesis will finally emerge. The creative tension between interpreting the body as cultural representation and embodiment as lived experience will continue to produce innovative and creative research.

There are of course new issues on the horizon that sociologists will need to examine. The posthuman body, cybernetics, genetic modification, and artificial bodies are obvious issues. The wealth and quality of this research suggests that the sociology of the body is not a passing fashion but an important aspect of mainstream sociology.

This overview has provided a critical analysis of the intellectual state of contemporary sociological studies of the body. For the sociology of the body to remain a vibrant and creative area of study, a new research agenda is needed that will embrace the revolution currently unfolding in the biomedical sciences, which has major implications, to borrow an expression from Heidegger, for “the question of Being.” Contemporary applications of science imply an entirely new relationship between self and body, which once more raises the fundamental problem of Cartesian mind-body dualism. The principal criticisms of the existing sociology of the body are, first, that it has become too abstract and theoretical and hence somewhat remote from empirical research, in particular from detailed

ethnographies of the body. Second, by concentrating on the body as a text or discourse, it has neglected the issue of human practice and performance. Third, it needs to address more seriously the moral questions related to eugenics, namely cloning, genetics, and new reproductive technologies. In short, it needs to address the possibility of a posthuman society (Fukuyama 2002). Sociology has become too concerned with the symbolic representation of the body in terms of sexual identity, dress, consumption, and obesity. Future research work should also address medical technology, human rights to life, aging, and the diseased body. The future of the subfield should be more concerned with the study of the human consequences of globalization, especially the consequences of global technology (military, genetic, and informational). In summary, sociology has in the past approached the body and embodiment from within a narrow cultural framework, but the contemporary transformation of the human body by biomedical sciences and their economic and military applications must in the future be addressed with greater intellectual rigor, breadth, and determination.



# THE SOCIOLOGY OF DISABILITY

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Disability is a phenomenon that is socially defined, has pervasive social consequences for individuals, and has significant impact on societies (Barnartt 2005). The social reality of disability is characterized by “considerable variation in the experience of impairment by large numbers of people who nonetheless share common conditions of exclusion, marginalization, and disadvantage” (Williams 2001:141). At the same time, in spite of exclusion, marginalization, and disadvantage, the symbolic meaning inherent in disability may be expressed in a strong and positive sense of identity. Disability can also be viewed as a political privilege, in the sense of carrying permission to be exempt from the work-based system, military service, debt, and criminal liability (Stone 1984).

In the medical literature, disability is considered to be “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities” (Fried et al. 2004). In this context, disability is viewed as a medical entity. Diagnosis of disability is based on either (a) a self-reported difficulty or need for assistance in carrying out activities and/or performing usual roles or (b) performance-based tests of functioning. While impairment is a precondition for disability as a medical entity, disability does not necessarily have to result from a physical or mental impairment.

The demography and epidemiology of disability vary depending on how persons with disability are defined (Verbrugge 1990; LaPlante 1991, 1993; Ing and Tewey 1994; Kaye et al. 1996; La Plante and Carlson 1996). The Social Security Administration defines persons with disabilities as those who have a physical or mental condition that prevents them from engaging in paid employment. Other definitions of disability include having a defined

condition assumed to be disabling (e.g., deafness); using assistive devices; self-identifying as a person with a disability; and being regarded by others as having a disability. Irving Zola (1993) insightfully argued that the conception, measurement, and counting of disability differ validly depending on the purpose for which this information is needed. In addition, disability is a status that may or may not be applicable at different times in an individual’s life. Zola maintained, therefore, that disability is best conceived as fluid and continuous rather than as fixed or dichotomous. The relevance of the latter point is assuming increasing importance in the context of population aging.

## HOW DID THE TOPIC OF DISABILITY BECOME A MATTER OF INTEREST?

After World War II, social scientists working in social medicine, social policy, and rehabilitation began to focus on social aspects of chronic illness and disability relating to injury. Most of this work focused on the prevalence of disability but lacked agreement on definitions or approaches to measurement. Pressures for measurement clarification emerged from different sources, in turn representing different interests. An early British report, seeking to document the numbers of persons with impairments, showed that terms such as *impairment*, *disability*, and *handicap* were not clearly defined. The World Health Organization (WHO) undertook the task of developing a clear set of definitions, which culminated in publication of the *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps* (WHO 1980). In the interest

of rationalizing allocation of Social Security benefits in the United States, Saad Nagi (1979) produced similar definitions as he attempted to reconcile contradictions between definitions of “medical impairment” and “ability to work.”

Although Nagi and colleagues contributed to the sociology of disability as early as 1965, there was little follow-up on their concepts until reports were issued in the 1990s by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Academy of Sciences (Pope and Tarlov 1991; Brandt and Pope 1997). Terminology originally specified by Nagi (1965) provided a basis for the IOM’s differentiation among pathology, impairment, functional limitation, a potentially disabling condition, and a disability. The IOM reports strongly endorsed use of a conceptualization of disability that incorporates environmental factors as primary contributors to the creation of disability and recommended shifting the focus from the *individual and the impairment* to the *interaction between the impairment and the environment*. Importantly, in this view, the cultural category of “disabled” is socially, rather than medically, constructed (Higgins 1992), in part by cultural definitions and in part by the demands and constraints of social and physical environments. This conceptualization challenges the medical model of disability, in which the focus is on an impairment-related limitation in need of remediation.

Social scientists’ collective contributions to a “socio-medical model of disabling illness” (Bury 1997:138) helped to stimulate new ways of looking at disability. For example, the work of Goffman (1963) on stigma influenced views of the nature of mental and physical illness and legitimacy of conceptual and research approaches. Economists focused on national issues associated with disability benefits and employment, many of which were sociological as well as economic in nature, for example, the structure and function of disability programs, costs associated with vocational rehabilitation (VR) and with particular types of disability such as mental retardation, analyses of public programs such as Social Security, and effects of disability on the labor supply. In 1956, enactment of Social Security Disability Insurance formalized a policy connection between medical prognosis and employment potential, establishing a guarantee of benefits for persons deemed at risk, that is, vulnerable, due to their health. The policy was aimed at reducing these persons’ economic risk, but the legislation effectively provided a context for discussion of rights among persons with disabilities. Politicians proposed the concepts of targeted help and individual self-reliance as alternatives to universal entitlement, reflecting concern about the ability of the welfare state to assume care for persons with disabilities—illustrating contrasting viewpoints that have framed a continuing debate about appropriate societal responses to the needs of disabled persons.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the combined impetus provided by the civil rights movement, an increasing number of persons with disabilities attending college, and

skilled leadership among persons with disabilities contributed to the beginning of the independent living movement (Scotch 1989). This movement was premised on a sociopolitical model of disability, that is, disability arising from interaction of a person with a particular environment, as opposed to a medical model in which disability is linked with physical or mental impairment. In the sociopolitical model, disability is viewed as an outcome of person-environment interaction rather than as an individual trait. This view, in turn, implies that the disability equation can be modified by modifying a person’s ability through rehabilitation or environmental change. The social model of disability developed by British theorists essentially discounted individual functional limitations and focused instead on the effects of an “oppressive” environment and social structure.

In the United States, the independent living and disability rights movements contributed to the framing of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.

Against the dominant biomedical model, it was argued that the differences between the impairments arising out of clinically different diseases or accidents were less important than what they shared in terms of their psychological, social, and economic consequences. In part, this was a recognition of the limited impact that much disease-based rehabilitation had on the lives of those people going through long periods of treatment. What was important . . . it was argued, was not so much the nuanced variation of the unfolding of disease in different cases but the broad impact of living with such symptoms on global areas of social life: work, education, family, sex, identity, self-esteem, etc. (Williams 2001:128)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first major civil rights legislation for disabled persons, prohibiting discrimination by the federal government and private and governmental entities contracting with the federal government, such as educational institutions. In contrast to earlier legislation that had provided or extended benefits, Section 504 established full participation as a civil right. The legislation represented the convergence of two trends in public policy: (a) extending the nondiscrimination language of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to persons with disabilities and (b) broadening the scope of social programs benefiting disabled persons (Scotch 2001). The second of these objectives called for increased funding and led to two presidential vetoes of the bill, distracting attention from the first objective of the legislation—that is, preventing discrimination. One motivating factor for Section 504 was that persons served by the VR system frequently encountered difficulty entering the job market after completing their training, due to structural and attitudinal barriers. Therefore, without structural modification and protection from discrimination, VR funds were not accomplishing the goal of returning individuals to gainful employment. Section 504 provided a basis for passage, in 1990, of the more comprehensive Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## SOCIOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF DISABILITY

Sociological research on chronic illness, impairment, and disability originated in an effort to understand the relationship between experiences of symptoms or impairment, the social situations within which people live, and the combined effect these have on people's lives. Major themes that have been developed include adjusting to disability through socialization processes and assumption of a sick role, understanding disability as a form of deviance, the minority group model of disability, emergence of disability movements, and management of illness and disability in people's everyday lives.

### Adjusting to Disability

For much of the twentieth century, disability was primarily defined by a biomedical framework and understood as a property inherent in individuals who were "different from normal." The medical model largely equated disability with dependency, implying individuals' need for welfare and other forms of social insurance. Thus, much early sociological and social psychology research focused on individuals' adjustment to a dependent status. Disability onset was viewed as requiring a redefinition of one's situation and a reconstruction of roles and social interaction patterns (Albrecht 1976). Scholars focused on adjustment to, and coping with, impairment (Cohn 1961; Kelman, Miller, and Lowenthal 1964; Ludwig and Collette 1970; Safilios-Rothschild 1970; Ben-Sira 1981, 1983), morale and motivation in rehabilitation settings (Litman 1966; Starkey 1968; Brown and Rawlinson 1976), and the importance of social support from family and community (New et al. 1968; Tolsdorf 1976; Petersen 1979; Smith 1979, 1981).

In her exploration of the complexity of individuals' interactions with the administrative system of welfare, Blaxter (1976) maintained that disability is best understood within the framework of a career, in which the final outcome is always in the future. Patients' definitions of self and needs are continually being developed and negotiated, in turn shaping their help-seeking behavior. Blaxter, like Roth (1963) and Scheff (1965), observed that the way that individuals present themselves is shaped by the agencies with whom they interact, setting in motion a continuous process of adjustment. Julius Roth (1963) saw timetables developed by the medical profession as structuring the patient's career in ways congruent with the agenda of the medical organization. Scheff (1965, 1966) proposed that organizations use stereotypes of the "proper client" as a device for handling uncertainty. The more marginal the clients, the less precise and valid the stereotypes will be. Safilios-Rothschild (1976) noted that there was striking similarity in attitudes toward the disabled and women, both of whom have an understood need to accept and adjust to a stereotyped role to receive approval.

How definitions of disability are socially created (Higgins 1992; Goode 1994) or sustained through interaction (Gerschick 1998), and through attitudes of others toward persons with disabilities (Yuker, Block, and Campbell 1960; Siller and Chipman 1964; Yuker, Block, and Young 1966; Richardson and Royce 1968; Shears and Jensema 1969; Richardson 1970, 1971; Schroedel 1978; Altman 1981), has been a theme in the work of many sociologists. Comer and Piliavin (1972) proposed that the able-bodied display less variability in verbal output, less smiling behavior, less eye contact, and greater motor inhibition with the disabled. This, in turn, limits types of social interaction for disabled persons and provides them with fewer opportunities for trying out roles and behavior. Davis (1964) maintained that the more clearly defined and visible the disability, the greater the ease with which the disabled individual and the group adjust to each other. Ambiguity surrounding degree of impairment, conversely, has a negative impact on interpersonal relationships (Zahn 1973), resulting in confused expectations, goals that are unclear, and roles that are contradictory. Thus, according to Gove (1976), societies such as the United States, which have developed formal processes for dealing with the disabled, tend to be more tolerant of disability than those that have no such processes.

The opportunity for legitimate exemptions from usual role obligations, consistent with Parsons's (1951) concept of the sick role, was regarded by some sociologists as almost synonymous with disability. For example, Gordon (1966) used the notion of an "impaired role" to describe the exclusion of disabled persons from social activities and responsibilities. David Mechanic (1959) focused on disability as an organic problem, stating that "blindness, paraplegia, deafness, or some other condition . . . renders [the] ability to occupy normal social roles either limited, doubtful, or impossible" (p. 38). Mechanic (1968) later acknowledged the critical role of the environment, however: "the operating principle of . . . rehabilitation attempts is to change the skills and environment of a person so that his condition results in the least possible disability and disruption of life patterns" (p. 410). Hahn (1994) notes that this recommendation could have placed medical sociology at the center of the emerging field of psychosocial rehabilitation. Mechanic's focus on individual functioning and on the supposedly inherent effects of an impairment appeared to stem from the medical model of disability, although his later acknowledgment of the importance of the fit between individuals' characteristics and the environments in which they functioned (Mechanic and Aiken 1991) illustrated a shift away from the implications of the sick-role concept.

### Disability as Deviance

Theories of deviance also influenced sociological studies of disability, beginning with Goffman's (1963) work on management of stigma. Davis (1964) examined the impact of stigma on interpersonal perceptions of disability, and

Safilios-Rothschild (1970) concluded that the position of disabled persons could be best analyzed using a general theory of deviance. Freidson (1965) and Scott (1965, 1969) also considered disability within a deviance or “societal reaction theory” framework (Gove 1976).

The societal reaction theorist attaches little significance to primary deviance except insofar as others react to it. For example, according to Erikson (1964),

Deviance is not a property *inherent* in certain forms of behavior, it is the property *conferred upon* these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. The critical variable in the study of deviance then is the social audience which eventually determines whether or not any episode of behavior or any class of episodes is labeled deviant. (P. 11)

Similarly, Becker (1963) argued that social groups create deviance by making rules where infractions constitute deviant behavior and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders, that is, “offenders.” Thus, individuals are processed by government and private agencies and found to be either disabled or not disabled. The disabled are often channeled into an institutional setting, where there is a disability subculture the person is expected to fit into. Scott (1965) described welfare agencies for the blind as engaged in a socialization process, “the purpose of which is to prepare a disabled person to play a type of deviant role” and “make blind persons out of people who cannot see” (p. 135).

The literature on disability as deviance argued that, like other stigmatized groups, disabled persons tend to be evaluated as a category rather than as individuals. Two predominantly negative stereotypes are likely to be applied: one stereotype of the particular impairment (blind, spastic, etc.) and one that is attached to the general label of “disabled” (Blaxter 1976). Freidson (1965) maintained that labeling, segregating, and feedback processes apply to the disabled as to other deviants; the disabled person is so defined because he deviates from what he himself or others consider normal and appropriate. Individuals may, therefore, develop a wide variety of concealing techniques to avoid the stigmatized label (see, e.g., Goffman 1963; Davis 1964; Hunt 1966).

Gove noted that both societal reaction theorists and rehabilitation theorists see disability behavior as largely a product of role relationships. Societal reaction theorists see the social system as creating and stabilizing deviant behavior, however, while rehabilitation theorists see the same processes as helping the disabled individual lead a “normal” life. This may be a labeling difference between the two to some extent, but the differences are also quite real to a large extent. Whether the processes are primarily beneficial or detrimental is an empirical question.

The greater the individual’s resources, the greater the likelihood of avoiding being channeled into the role of the impaired and disabled (Gove and Howell 1974). Similarly, Safilios-Rothschild (1976) noted that high social status is

likely to be an overriding characteristic whose desirability can outweigh the undesirability of several other characteristics, including disability. Persons considered to have high social status are most likely to be able to retain their majority status rights and to become rehabilitated on their own terms.

## The Minority Group Model of Disability

The passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 contributed to a civil rights perspective and, in turn, to a minority perspective in which disability was seen as generated by a disabling environment (DeJong 1979; Gliedman and Roth 1980; Stroman 1982; Hahn 1982, 1983, 1985a; Christiansen and Barnartt 1987). Within the framework of the minority group model as discussed by Hahn (1982, 1984, 1985b), people are categorized as disabled because of stigmatizing or prejudicial attitudes about discernible bodily differences rather than because of their functional impairments. The minority group model of disability includes three important postulates:

- The source of major problems for persons with disabilities is social attitudes.
- Almost every facet of the environment has been shaped by public policy.
- In a democratic society, policies reflect pervasive attitudes and values (Hahn 1986).

Thus, both the sources and the solutions for problems of disability are external, and attitudinal discrimination is identified as the major barrier for disabled persons. The minority group model of disability can include alternative theoretical perspectives, for example, a labeling-interactionist perspective, as discussed by Conrad and Schneider (1992), can help investigate social meanings of disability in the context of historical changes in deviance designations.

Hahn (1985a, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 2000) argued that disabled persons lack a sense of “generational continuity” that might enable them to transmit information regarding means of combating prejudice from one cohort of disabled people to the next. Thus, disabled persons can be termed a “unigenerational minority,” reacting to perceived social oppression at a particular period. Hahn (1994) also noted that conceptual frameworks applied to the study of disability may embody quite different policy implications. For example, a sick-role perspective, in which the interpretation of disability entails exemptions from usual social obligations, is likely to be associated with analysis of welfare. The minority group model, on the other hand, calls attention to the investigation of antidiscrimination legislation and social movements.

According to Gill (2001), there are important differences between disabled persons and other minorities, however. One difference noted by Gill is that negative ascriptions based on disability can be linked, at least superficially, to “real” human differences. Another important

difference, she argued, is that unlike members of race and ethnic groups, most disabled persons identify as typical, unless they have developed a political or cultural consciousness that centralizes difference.

## DISABILITY MOVEMENTS

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In the 1970s, deaf persons protested outside telephone companies around the country because of anger at having to pay for special equipment and spend more to make long-distance telephone calls. This demonstration was interpreted as an emotional response to the shattered hope that years of volunteer effort to achieve telecommunications access would be successful. Exclusion, illustrated by the exclusion experienced by deaf persons from telephone access, came to play a positive role in the evolution of a "disability community," serving as a catalyst for a sense of shared identity and identifying a target for collective action (Scotch 2001). In a similar way, black power, feminist, and other social movements of the 1960s stressed a positive self-image rooted in the collective identity of an excluded group demanding greater participation.

Scotch (2001) argues that a number of factors helped to nurture a social movement of disabled persons:

- Medical technologies, including prosthetics, medications, and surgical techniques, enabled longer life, survival of injuries, and fuller participation in everyday life activities.
- The popularization of an ideology of deinstitutionalization and normalization, especially in the mental health field, encouraged the growth of noninstitutional support systems and greater participation in community life.
- With the changing age structure of the larger society, an increasing number of elderly persons had physical disabilities and shared service needs.
- The Vietnam War produced a large number of disabled veterans who were activists, and the war itself generated widespread protests that helped to legitimate social activism.

It is also important that during the 1960s and early 1970s a number of major programs were enacted that promoted more complete participation by persons with disabilities: the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, expanded funding for vocational and independent living services under the VR program beginning in 1968, the Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Act of 1970, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1974, and Project Head Start in 1974. These programs represented a logical extension of a pattern of expanding entitlements and services provided by the federal government based on broadly held social and political values, a pattern referred to by Daniel Bell as a "revolution of rising entitlements" (Scotch 2001). This pattern, more than vocal advocacy by disabled persons, is thought to have fostered the adoption of Section 504 of the

1973 Rehabilitation Act. Consumer groups did, however, subsequently protest the delayed implementation of Section 504 at offices of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which contributed to disability groups becoming empowered to participate more actively in the political arena.

The problems faced by persons with different types of impairments, and the proposed solutions for these problems, may be quite different, making the development of a shared consciousness problematic (Scotch 1989). Barnartt and Scotch (2002) studied "contentious political actions" within disabled communities from 1970 to 1999. They concluded that demands for desired changes and actions were most often impairment specific. "Cross-disability" protests, involving demands that potentially apply to people with all types of impairments, were found to occur only 28 percent of the time. This analysis by Barnartt and Scotch suggested that, because persons with different impairments may not have a shared collective consciousness, concerted advocacy by large numbers of persons with disabilities is likely to be infrequent.

## MANAGING THE EXPERIENCE OF CHRONIC ILLNESS/DISABILITY

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Analyses that attempt to understand how people manage illness in their everyday lives represent an effort to illuminate an "insider's" perspective: What is the subjective experience of illness? The experience of disability is one focus within the subjective experience of illness as discussed by Conrad (1987). Interestingly, Conrad attributes an emerging interest in the illness experience in part to the disability movement that had its origins in the 1970s: "These self-help and advocacy groups took experiential data seriously, since they were in a sense 'experts' in it, and fostered a new social awareness of the problems of living with disability" (pp. 3–4).

A sociology of illness experience is concerned with how people live with and in spite of illness. It is based on systematically collected and analyzed data from a number and variety of persons with a particular illness, as in Schneider and Conrad's (1983) study of living with epilepsy and O'Brien's (1983) study of living with chronic hemodialysis. The focus is on the meaning of illness to the individual, the social organization of the individual's world, and the strategies the individual uses in adaptation.

This perspective is qualitatively different from the notion of adjusting to a disability status defined by others (an "outsider's" rather than an "insider's" view). It recognizes that individuals creatively manage their illness in their everyday lives, defining and redefining who they are and how they relate to others. Corbin and Strauss (1985) argued that illness experience can be valuably conceptualized in terms of work that must be accomplished. Because work is a concept central to the lives of individuals who do not have chronic illness, this conceptualization indicates

shared experience for people who are ill and people who are well—a different interpretation from the sick-role conceptualization. Conrad (1987) cautions against overconceptualizing the illness experience as types of work, however, maintaining that managing various aspects of illness has other meanings as well.

The concept of career, used by Blaxter (1976) in her study of disabled individuals' interactions with social agencies, is relevant to understanding the illness experience. Conrad notes that the concept of illness trajectory (Corbin and Strauss 1985) may be even more appropriate to studies in the experience of illness because it encompasses process and change and does not assume linearity or orderliness in illness progression. Other focal concerns from research on the experience of illness include the need to manage uncertainty and stigma (see, e.g., Schneider and Conrad 1983) and the need for biographical work and reconstitution of self (see, e.g., Corbin and Strauss 1985; Charmaz 1987).

### **Recent Perspectives in the Sociology of Disability**

The growth of the disability rights movement and political efforts to achieve social rights in the 1970s and 1980s were important elements in an emergent change in the conceptualization of disability. The disability rights movement had the goal of changing both the self-concepts and societal conceptions of participants (Anspach 1979). After the emergence of the disability rights movement, disabled persons were seen as shaping negotiated outcomes (“nothing about us without us”) rather than passively adapting to labels imposed on them (Hanks and Poplin 1981). After passage of the ADA in 1990, disability was increasingly viewed as a diversity, inclusion, and civil rights issue.

For persons with physical impairments and chronic illness, however, negotiated outcomes in medical care are often challenging, despite increased popularizing of self-help and self-care strategies in the context of a “consumer movement” in health care. To a large degree, the curative model of medical care continues to be the dominant model in the United States, a situation that has been labeled a “residual problem” in our system of health care (Fox 1997). Health promotion and rehabilitation models can make important contributions to outcomes for persons with chronic or disabling conditions. Better-informed patients are more likely to become involved in health-promotion behaviors, and the more individuals are willing to actively pursue strategies to improve their health status and manage their own rehabilitation, the better their health outcomes are likely to be. Combining different models of care in actual practice is challenging, however, because each model has its own inherent assumptions, attitudes, and values—that is, the different models represent different paradigms. An important difference between the cure paradigm and health promotion or rehabilitation paradigms in medical care is that these paradigms are centered on different

responsible agents. The physician is the agent credited with achieving cure, but the patient-actor must be ultimately responsible for health promotion and rehabilitation achievements. Clinicians, understandably, want to preserve their role as the owners of expert knowledge about cure-focused, or at least symptom-managing, treatment. Clinician monopoly over expert treatment knowledge is challenged by a patient-actor who defines and pursues health promotion and rehabilitation goals as an active partner in the care system (Kutner 2003).

In a sample of disabled activists, Hahn and Belt (2004) found that self-identity related to a personal affirmation of disability was a significant predictor of refusing medical treatment for disabling conditions. Age of onset of the individual's disability was also a predictor. Persons with earlier age of disability onset were more likely to reject curative treatment. Hahn and Belt suggested two potential explanations for the latter finding. First, early disability onset is likely to lead to a stronger personal sense of disability identity. Second, early disability onset gives longer exposure to medical interventions that often prove disappointing because they do not provide cure. In addition to affirmation of disability identity, communal attachments were strong values among the activists who were studied.

A recurring theme in the literature on disability, evident in discussions of isolation, invisibility, and struggle (see, e.g., Zola 1982), is disabled individuals' desire for connection with others. A central feature of the disability “insider” experience is described as a persistent and disquieting sense of mistaken identity. Tension between the desire to be viewed as “typical” versus the desire to be able to be comfortable affirming one's personal disability identity (this is who I am) is at the heart of the social experience of disability discussed by Carol Gill (2001). The identity that the individual struggles to present to the world is commonly dismissed, with stereotypical identity ascriptions substituted for this identity. In one individual's words, “my disability is how people respond to my disability” (Craig Vick, cited in Gill 2001:352). Thus, disabled persons must critique and continually expand the concept of “normality” and work to bridge the gap between their self-views and public perceptions and between their inner and outer worlds. Bogdan and Taylor (1987, 1989), however, argue that severely disabled people can have moral careers that promote inclusion rather than exclusion and that a sociology of acceptance, rather than rejection, merits study.

The development of disability movements facilitated disabled persons' acceptance of self, their “pride,” and a focus on positive identity (Hahn and Belt 2004). At the same time, disability identity conflicts with economic and cultural imperatives of a highly normalizing society that pursues the goal of “bodily uniformity” as measured by criteria such as beauty, health, fitness, and intelligence. An ideology of “able-ism” has exclusionary social functions (Turner 2001), as privileged designations of the body are preserved and validated, providing cultural capital to those

who can claim such status (Garland-Thomson 2004). Hahn (1994) argued that the dynamics of capitalism and “commodity fetishism” encourage people to emulate virtually unattainable physical ideals. The environment, therefore, remains a powerful influence as disabled persons strive for integrity in self and in social relations (Gill 2001).

The sociology of disability can benefit from focusing not only on the “politics of identity” but also on the “politics of structures,” according to Williams (2001). Developments in social security systems and the entire “disability business” in Western societies can significantly affect the societal meaning of disability (Stone 1984; Albrecht 1992). A minority group perspective on people with disabilities can have political uses, calling attention to inequities in services and opportunities. Zola (1991), however, explicitly rejected use of an “us and them” framework. He recognized that aging societies with growing numbers of persons with chronic illness had great significance for the development of the disability movement, creating shared challenges for the “able-bodied” and the “disabled” and the opportunity to effectively partner to achieve broadly applicable objectives such as available transportation systems and assisted living options.

Where high economic costs are involved, such as in mass transportation and long-term care, there may well be a decided disadvantage for the needs of people with disabilities to be thought of as “special” and “restrictive” rather than general, if not universal. (Zola 1993:30)

## PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Williams (2001) argues that the study of disability lacks a unifying theory or perspective and that conceptual issues are at the core of the sociology of disability. Because there are “seemingly infinite permutations of the experience of being physically different in a highly normalizing society” (p. 130), he maintains that much more study should be focused on the real effects of different impairments and how these translate into complex negotiated aspects of everyday life. Williams explicitly refers to being physically different, but presumably he would also include the experience of being mentally different as well.

There have been few efforts to analyze parallels and differences in the experience and negotiated outcomes of persons with different impairments. The degree to which a shared sense of community develops among persons with a particular condition is likely to vary markedly. Having a shared, distinctive language is a very important aspect of membership in the deaf community. Whether or not persons with a particular potentially disabling condition have social contact on a regular basis significantly influences the opportunity for forming peer relationships, as illustrated by the emergent “social world” of the renal dialysis clinic (O’Brien 1983; Kutner 1987).

As modern medicine prolongs life in persons with serious diseases and injuries, an increasing number of persons have a wide range of potentially disabling conditions. As public health knowledge becomes increasingly sophisticated, a condition such as obesity that is associated with reported physical limitations may be defined as a disability (Gilman 2004). Paradoxically, therefore, disability may be more prevalent in more highly developed societies than in less developed societies.

The worldwide phenomenon of population aging also has far-reaching implications for the continued development of the sociology of disability. With aging, every life virtually evolves into disability, making disability perhaps the essential characteristic of being human (Garland-Thomson 2004). Changes associated with the aging process thus represent another sense in which disability and “normality” form a continuum (Blaxter 1976). Because every individual will inevitably age and is likely to experience one or more physical challenges commonly considered chronic illness or disability, the acceptance of disability is the acceptance of an inevitable part of oneself. Recognizing population aging in Western societies, the growing prevalence of chronicity, and the globalization of health risks, Zola (1989) argued for a necessary universalizing of disability policy.

Barnartt (2005) has identified a number of additional opportunities for research that can enlarge sociological understanding of disability:

- Demands for inclusion and needs for planning the distribution of scarce resources generate questions about the appropriate conceptualization of disability and its subsequent measurement (Altman 2001).
- Examination of variation across cultures in the definition, treatment, and experience of disability could increase understanding of the processes by which social barriers arise.
- Physical and social environments are pivotal in understanding all aspects of disability, including the development of impairments and functional limitations as well as the emergence of disability from functional limitations.
- There has been little study of factors that affect access to rapidly advancing technology and assistive devices that can change people’s lives and, subsequently, the importance of these devices for individuals’ social roles, integration, and participation.
- Little is known about the impact of transitioning from a disabled to a nondisabled status, as opposed to the usual focus on transitioning from a nondisabled to a disabled status. What meaning does this have for the person’s roles, identity, and behavior?
- Positive aspects of family functioning with disability (care-receiving, family adaptation) have received little attention. An important dimension may be family members’ involvement in emergent communities that have a shared disability focus, for example, childhood disorders such as autism or rare medical conditions. Electronic

communication may be a central means of community emergence and linkage, facilitating sharing of information and support.

- The ethical and legal issues that affect persons with disabilities, illustrated by decisions about end of life, genetic research, and transplantation, are a rich area for study, as discussed by Asch (2001). Hahn (1994) notes that efforts to prevent disability, for example, through genetic counseling, convey a message that impairments are so undesirable that no one would want to accept living with such a condition—a message that is in direct opposition to positive acceptance of disability as a defining feature of one's identity.
- Social movements among persons with disabilities have been increasing in many parts of the world, potentially contributing to tension among disability subgroups in the population.

- The interrelation of disability and socioeconomic variables merits continued study, especially in the context of a life course perspective.

Although disability is a fundamental facet of human diversity, it has received much less critical analysis within sociology than have race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and social class. Irving Zola advocated for “bringing our bodies back in” to develop an adequate sociology of disability (Turner 2001). Zola, however, made it clear that he did not argue for a new, separate sociology of the body or for a separate paradigm. Rather, he maintained that what sociology has claimed for age, gender, race, and social class needs to be done for bodily experiences. Placing these experiences at the center of analysis is the first, important step (Zola 1991).



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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF EMOTIONS

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Social psychology in the first half of the twentieth century was dominated first by behaviorist principles and then by a cognitive backlash to that behaviorism. By the 1970s, the disciplines of sociology and psychology were ready for a new intellectual agenda, this one focused on the central role of emotions. Since emotions are experienced as internal, physiological states, a sociology of emotion might seem like an oxymoron. But influential works published almost simultaneously by several major sociologists in the late 1970s and early 1980s showed that a major intellectual movement was afoot (Collins 1975, 1981; Heise 1979; Hochschild 1983; Kemper 1978; Scheff 1979).

By the second half of the twentieth century, there were several major reviews of the cumulating sociological work on emotions (Gordon 1990; Scheff 1988; Thoits 1989). Two themes were common in those early overviews. One was a developing definition of emotion as incorporating several features: (1) cognitive assessment of a situation; (2) the arousal of a physiological response; (3) the labeling of that response using culturally available concepts; and (4)

the expression of that feeling, moderated by cultural prescriptions. Such a definition clearly implies an underlying metatheoretical view, as well as an agenda for research.

The second theme present in early reviews was the classification of sociological perspectives on emotions into several major schools of thought. Conflicts between cultural and positivist approaches dominated the first years of the field. “Positivist,” in this context, meant scholars such as Kemper (1979), who developed theories about structural situations that systematically evoked physiologically distinct emotional states. For example, an interaction with a powerful other that led to status loss would result in sadness and depression. “Cultural,” on the other hand, was the dominant view of emotions in the discipline—as socially constructed, culturally prescribed features of social life. Some theorists, such as Hochschild (1983) and Scheff (1979), seemed to assume a physiological substrate on which sociocultural processes were overlaid. Others explicitly argued that emotional response was an undifferentiated arousal that was *nothing* until it was labeled within a cultural frame (Schacter and Singer 1962).

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The distinction between these two positions was appropriately blurred when Theodore Kemper (1987) proposed a compromise. He argued that while some emotions are instinctive and physiologically distinct, others are differentiated from these basic emotions by cultural forces. The number and character of emotions that are experienced in a culture are determined by the social relationships that were central to that group's social fabric. This position was acceptable to most sociologists of emotion, so long as we left open the question of how many emotions are basic: The most culturally determinist position would argue for just one—undifferentiated arousal; Kemper argued for four basic, physiologically distinct emotions—anger, happiness, fear, and sadness.

Later reviews of the sociological literature on emotions differentiated theories to a somewhat greater extent, distinguishing among cultural/normative, symbolic interactionist, psychoanalytic, structural, and evolutionary theories. The latest comprehensive review groups authors into the following areas: dramaturgical theories, symbolic interactionist theories, interaction ritual theories, power and status theories, and exchange theories (Turner and Stets 2005, 2006). To some extent, this classification exercise may have outlived its original purpose. Like most theoretical divisions, these categories do not often contain opposing theories that make competing predictions about the same phenomenon. Instead, they focus on *different* phenomena, conceptualize different features of emotional life, and theoretically describe different sociological processes that shape those features. As such, it is more accurate to say that the sociology of emotions has developed an understanding of a wide array of emotional phenomena than to say that there are several competing theories of emotions.

In this chapter, we will summarize what sociologists know about emotions, their production, and their impact on other facets of social life. This catalog of theoretical development and empirical findings from the fruitful end of the twentieth century will provide a template for the contributions of the sociology of emotions to the discipline and to social science more generally in the twenty-first century.

## THE CLASSICAL ORIENTATIONS

The classic treatments of emotion in sociology were macrolevel in their focus. Durkheim's anomie, Marx's alienation, and Weber's charismatic leadership all represented social facts that were characteristic of certain system configurations. Emotions might be experienced by individuals (just as suicide is an individual act), but the classic theorists used emotions to link social positions to the common experiences of large numbers of people who occupied those positions. For example, Marx (1983:156–178) saw emotional life as molded by social structures of production typical of different eras. Material economic arrangements led to alienation and disenchantment in the laboring classes;

one's emotional experiences were heavily determined by one's class position. Alternatively, the religious fervor produced by ideological structures could work to support a repressive class system and therefore might be propagated by the elite for mass consumption (Marx 1983:287–323).

Weber (Gerth and Mills 1946) and Durkheim (1912) focused on emotional responses to religion as powerful forces for the maintenance of social forms. Weber argued that capitalism arose partially because of ubiquitous emotional responses encountered by new Protestants during the Reformation. Experiencing anxiety over their predetermined status as saved or damned, individuals strove to acquire external accoutrements of material success that might signal a favored status. Once capitalism was in place, Weber argued that rational bureaucracy required emotional management to isolate emotional response to private rather than formal institutional spheres.

Durkheim emphasized that religious ecstasy was a social fact rather than a private experience. He analyzed emotional responses as societal constructions in which the moral sentiments of the group are reaffirmed. Such emotional experiences had a strong coercive element in Durkheim's view. Individuals were not free to resist such emotional forces, since they were obligatory for true group membership. The ritual nature of social forms that produced these group-affirming emotions is the topic of later works by Goffman (1967) and Collins (2004) on interaction ritual.

Simmel (1950) emphasized the microstructures of social interaction rather than the macrostructures of the economic and religious institutions. His discussion of the emotional instability of dyads created the basis for modern theories about how social interaction leads to emotion. Simmel discussed how emotional expression in interactions could be a bridge to knowledge of another person. This insight led to Erving Goffman's analysis of impression management in public encounters.

Goffman (1956, 1959) argued that negative emotions like embarrassment and shame resulted from the inability to support one's desired self-presentation. Goffman greatly expanded our understanding of the place of emotion in social control, viewing feelings as a force motivating the individual to conform to normative and situational pressures. In addition, Goffman introduced the idea of the emotional deviant, the actor who is unable or unwilling to maintain the appropriate affective orientation to the situation in which he is enmeshed. In his work, we see the emotional responses of the actor as a cue indicating his or her allegiance to the group; rules of social order prescribe feelings as well as actions.

These classic theorists showed how emotion is a social rather than individual phenomenon, but they fell far short of developing a coherent, systematic view of the place that emotions hold in social life. Furthermore, much of the classical work and theorizing about emotions usually took a secondary or tangential position to some other social phenomenon such as religion or class conflict. Much of the

classic theoretical treatment of emotion was couched at the macrolevel as either bonding or binding forces within a collectivity. The superficial treatment of emotion in classic works failed to fully develop the inherently social nature of emotion. In the 1970s, however, a dramatic shift in focus permitted sociologists to develop a more comprehensive treatment of emotion.

Despite debates among positivists and social constructionist, early work in the sociology of emotions shared a common goal—carving a distinctively sociological niche for the empirical investigation of emotion. Epistemological conflicts withstanding, these theoretical camps collectively argued against a biological basis for understanding emotions. With the exception of Kemper (1978, 1990), early theorizing rooted emotion in social and cultural foundations rather than the biological and physiological foundations argued for by psychologists and evolutionary biologists. We will now turn our attention to the major theoretical contributions that emerged during the last 30 years, as well as providing a review of the corpus of empirical knowledge regarding the sociology of emotions.

## CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

### Emotion Culture: Feeling Rules and Emotion Work

Arlie Hochschild's (1983) study of Delta flight attendants, *The Managed Heart*, was perhaps the most influential of several monographs that marked the beginning of the modern sociological inquiry into emotions in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Hochschild identified four central concepts—feeling rules, emotional labor, surface acting, and deep acting—that defined the modern sociology of emotion for most nonspecialists and are featured in most sociological research on emotions. Sociologists embraced Hochschild's insight that emotions were governed by feeling rules and controlled through culturally guided management.

Hochschild (1983) built on the work of Goffman and Marx. *Feeling rules* are cultural norms that specify the type of emotion, the extent of emotion, and the duration of feeling that are appropriate in a situation. For example, our culture requires that a grieving spouse feel intense unhappiness immediately after the death but “snap out of it” after a few months. When what we feel differs from the cultural expectation, Hochschild argued that we actively engage in emotion management to create a more appropriate response. Such management can take several forms. *Surface acting* adjusts our expression of emotion to normative patterns. By pretending an emotion we do not feel, we elicit reactions from others that bolster our performance and may eventually transform it into a genuine one. Flight attendants that Hochschild (1983) studied reported pretending to be cheery so that passengers would respond to them as if they were friendly. The passengers' responses then led

to an authentic positive emotion. *Deep acting* involves a more basic manipulation of one's emotional state. Through physiological manipulation (deep breathing), shifting perceptual focus (concentrating on a positive aspect of a bad situation), or redefining the situation (thinking of a drunk passenger as a frightened child-like person), actors can change their feelings to conform to their ideas of appropriateness. In many cases, occupations have well-developed feeling rules. When emotion management is done for a wage, Hochschild (1983) called it *emotion work*. She linked this type of labor to class position, arguing that middle-class service jobs often involve managing one's own feelings to make clients feel good. Alienation from authentic feelings may result when emotion management becomes a pervasive part of occupational life.

*The Managed Heart* permanently changed the way readers and interested analysts viewed emotions. While before the smiling faces of service workers were perceived as a pleasant *lagniappe* of an economic transaction, it is now recognized that these are an element of the worker's job. Furthermore, we see a parallel between the type of effort required of a public face and the emotion management required of people in low-power positions everywhere in nonwork life. She defines emotion as “a sense, like the sense of hearing or sight” (Hochschild 1983:17). In the first two appendices, Hochschild clarifies her theoretical position in the context of classic literatures drawn from Darwin, Freud, and Goffman. It is clear that Hochschild has a strong sense of emotion as a basic response to events that occur in the social environment and of their signal function about the implications of those events for the self experiencing the emotion.

Hochschild was often viewed as the leader of the social constructionist school in the sociology of emotions, with *The Managed Heart* as its classic statement. Certainly, the emphasis of the monograph on the management of emotion put culture in the central role; however, the appendices made clear that Hochschild took a more mixed, inclusive approach. She challenged the organismic view only to the extent that it would have totally “wired in” emotions, without room for social interpretation. Perhaps, Hochschild's most important contribution was that she clearly defined emotions as a worthy area of study because emotions are central to organizations, institutions, and individual experience of social interaction. Moreover, her discussion of the “signaling function” of emotion, while it emerges from Freud, is highly compatible with structural symbolic interactionist views like Heise's (1979) and Kemper's (1978) social interactional theories. Hochschild, like Heise and Kemper, recognized that social events give rise to spontaneous emotion in a way that signals their import for the individual; only then does she proceed to detail how these spontaneous emotions can be transformed through emotion management.

Listed below are the six primary propositions stemming from Hochschild's (1983) seminal research on emotion management:

1. People actively manage emotions by controlling their display (surface acting) and by manipulating their thoughts and experiences (deep acting) to make their feelings correspond to norms (feeling rules).
2. Some occupations require emotion management as a condition of employment (emotional labor).
3. Emotional labor jobs are more common in service work, in middle-class work, and in women's work (e.g., in the service of major corporations and other capitalist institutions).
4. Emotion management as labor alienates workers from their true feelings by destroying the emotions' signal value about the self's relationship to the social environment. (The book also suggests this deleterious effect is more problematic when it is created for profit by a capitalist employer than when created in the context of other social relationships.)
5. Middle-class parents socialize their children for emotion management more than working-class parents do, to prepare them for emotional labor jobs.
6. Women are socialized for (and do more) emotion management because of their emotional labor jobs. When men have emotional labor jobs, their higher status buffers them from some of its effects.

*The Managed Heart* spawned a remarkable variety of work on emotion culture, emotion socialization, emotional deviance (and its consequences for labeling of self and others), emotion management, and the role that emotion plays in constituting and sustaining institutions (and revealing the strains in those institutions when there are functional disconnects within them). Indeed, it is one of the very few works these days that bridges the gap between social psychology and culture in sociology. However, it is striking how much of the research in the past 25 years since its publication has focused on some aspect of the first two propositions and how little has been done to follow up on the last four. Hochschild based *The Managed Heart* on Marx as well as Goffman, but we've largely ignored the creative synergy that she got from melding the two perspectives. We return to this point in our discussion of agendas for future progress in the sociology of emotions.

### Emotional Deviance: Labeling and Consequences for Mental Health

Sometimes, of course, emotions fail to match our cultural expectations and management efforts are ineffective. Peggy Thoits (1985) argued that persistent emotional deviance is interpreted as evidence of mental illness. In particular, she noted that self-labeling is likely to occur when an individual frequently is confronted with unmanageable, counternormative feelings. For example, a person who is filled with rage at minor slights might interpret these responses as signs of a deeper mental problem.

Such emotional deviance could be created by inadequate socialization or by structurally induced stress. When children are not taught (through modeling and reward) appropriate emotional responses, they display behavior problems. But even competently socialized actors are likely to experience emotional deviance under some structural conditions when they (1) occupy inconsistent roles; (2) belong to subcultures; (3) undergo role transitions, especially if they are nonnormative in timing or sequence; and (4) follow rigid rules associated with rituals or especially restrictive roles. For example, weddings are supposed to be times of joy, but the stresses of coordinating a complex social ritual often lead to negative emotion.

In a qualitative study of preschool-age children, Pollack and Thoits (1989) find support for sociocentric models of emotion socialization. This model, developed by Harris and Olthaf (1982), argues that children primarily learn about emotions through social interactions involving formal or informal verbal instruction rather than modeling or self-observation. The findings of Pollack and Thoits indicate that while children are "instructed" about emotions, this instruction often involves the construction of cognitive emotion maps that include connections between actions, contextual factors, and emotional responses. Unfortunately, much of the emotional instruction received by children fails to complete the cognitive emotion structures by making connections between these factors and physiological states. These incomplete maps render emotions less generalizable in the minds of young children and may account for the findings of Harris and Olthaf (1982) that indicated that older, but not younger, children were able to associate physiological sensations with emotion. The research by Pollack and Thoits supports a cultural perspective on emotion wherein individuals are actively socialized to attach cultural labels to emotions as well as learning the appropriate emotional responses to myriad situations. While the research of Pollack and Thoits indicates that formal and informal socialization processes contribute to the emotional socialization of young children, Hochschild's work reminds us that emotion socialization may be modified by occupation or socioeconomic position.

### Emotion and Self-Identity

The groundbreaking work of Hochschild (1983) and Thoits (1985, 1986) emphasized the extent to which the cultural milieu influenced how an actor experienced and managed emotional responses. Empirical work using this perspective has focused on the cultural norms that we use to interpret our experiences. Authentic emotion is there to be labeled, judged deviant, and managed. But what causes the authentic emotional response in the first place? Symbolic interactionists have tried to answer this question by examining the relationship between emotion and identity.

In identity theory, Sheldon Stryker (1992) conceptualized the self as a hierarchically organized set of identities. The identities represented commitment to social roles like

wife, mother, lawyer, and athlete. Social acts internalized identities to the extent that they are central to frequently enacted, positive role relationships embedded in the networks created by social structure. Emotions serve as motivators in this identity system: Role relationships that generate positive affect are enacted more frequently and move upward in the self-hierarchy. Identity enactments that routinely cause dissatisfaction move downward in the hierarchy. Therefore, if a manager found himself blocked in his career path at work, he might reorient his activities toward rewarding interactions with family and community organizations.

Emotions, in this theoretical perspective, result from adequate or inadequate role performances. Emotions, therefore, serve a signal function, indicating how well interactions are supporting one's sense of oneself in the situation. If a professor feels elation after a classroom interaction with students, the emotion signals that the performance in that identity is above normal expectations for the role. Since adequate role performances require coordinated action with others, we can get angry at others as well as ourselves for failed role enactment.

A final insight from identity theory is the sense in which emotions signal the importance of relationships to the self. Stryker argued that the strength of our emotional reaction to events is a way that we can gauge the centrality of an identity in the self-structure. A mother's depression at leaving her child for a return to work signals the higher salience of the parental compared to the worker role.

Affect control theory (Heise 1979; Robinson and Smith-Lovin 2006; Smith-Lovin 1990) uses a control system to specify which actions make up an adequate role performance. Its mathematical structure allows it to predict which emotional reactions will accompany adequate and inadequate performances. Affect control theory maps identities, actions, and emotions into three dimensions of cultural meaning—evaluation (good vs. bad), potency (powerful vs. powerless) and activity (lively vs. quiet). The identity of mother, for example, is fundamentally nicer, more powerful, and livelier than the identity of clerk. In affect control theory, emotions are signals about the extent to which events confirm or disconfirm identity meanings. When events are confirming, an actor's emotional response is determined by his or her identity and its cultural meaning. When things are going smoothly, mothers feel good, powerful, and lively because they occupy a positive identity. However, when events are disconfirming, the nature of the situation (and the deflection it caused) heavily determines the character of the emotional response. A mother who has hurt her child typically feels awful. In this case, emotions are powerful motivating forces, signaling the need for social action to restore fundamental meanings.

Emerging from the confluence of symbolic interactionism and identity theory, identity control theory (Burke 1991) represents another theoretical statement regarding the origin of identity-relevant emotions. Burke (1991) argues that individuals attempt to maintain the meanings

associated with their identities and that any disruption of these attempts will result in stress and negative emotions. Identity control theory follows Stryker's identity theory in conceptualizing the self as a theoretical construct comprising multiple identities organized into a salience hierarchy. Each identity has an associated meaning that serves as the standard reference by which incoming messages or reflected appraisals are measured. Confirmation of identities that are highly salient and important to an individual will produce strong positive emotions and serve to reinforce the identity's position near the top of the hierarchy. Conversely, repeated disconfirmation of salient identities results in strong negative emotions and causes individuals to reposition these identities in the salience hierarchy. Identity control theory predicts that identity confirmation always results in positive emotions, while disconfirmation results in negative emotion (Burke and Harrod 2005). However, recent work in this tradition has determined some inconsistencies in these predictions (Stets 2003, 2005).

While the two control theories, affect control theory and identity control theory, differ in the manner in which identities and emotions are conceptualized and measured, they share important symbolic interactionist principles. The theoretical overlap between the two theories, created by their common heritage to the influence of George Herbert Mead (Burke 1991; MacKinnon 1994) and their mutual dependence on control models (Powers 1973), results in many similar predictions. However, despite these similarities, they also generate some competing hypotheses permitting a critical test of the theories. The need for further work on the relationship between identity meanings and emotion is discussed in the final section.

### **Emotion and the Structure of Interaction: Micro- and Macrolevel Approaches**

In contrast to the symbolic interactionist theories that focus on identities and their cultural meanings, Kemper (1978) proposed a theory of emotions based on social exchange principles. He argued that two dimensions of social relationships—status and power—are universal. Relative positions on these dimensions define the key aspects of a relationship and determine its emotional character (Kemper and Collins 1990). Kemper argued that the emotion caused by status and power changes depends on the perceived source of the change and, in some cases, on whether or not the other person in the interaction was liked or disliked. For example, he said that status loss would result in anger if the loss appeared to be remediable; such anger would be functional in that it motivated action to regain the lost status. If the loss was irredeemable, however, it would lead to sadness and depression, saving energy and acclimating the individual to his or her new lowered state of resources. Status loss by another, if caused by oneself, led to guilt if the other was liked (facilitating group survival by preventing in-group insult). If the other was not liked, his or her status loss would cause happiness.

Kemper's work has been among the most prolific in generating new empirical work. He tested his own ideas in Kemper (1991), using his power-status model to "predict" a set of 162 emotions reported by respondents in the eight-nation study of emotions by Scherer, Wallbott, and Summerfield (1986). Hypotheses about four emotions—fear, anger, sadness, and joy—were supported in those studies. More recent work by Robinson (2006) confirms this result, showing that Kemper's model has greater specificity in predicting emotional outcomes than affect control theory (although affect control theory's formal, abstract formulation allows wider applicability). The most wide-ranging use of Kemper's model, however, has been the extent to which it has informed research outside the sociology of emotions, both in survey analyses of emotional well-being and distress and in group processes work on emotional production during exchange and group discussion. Kemper's reliance on two fundamental dimensions of sociological study has made it easy to translate his insights into research problems within other traditions.

Randall Collins (1981, 2004) joined Kemper in advocating status and power as the two fundamental dimensions of social interaction. Collins's goal was to account for macrolevel structure through aggregating interactions among individuals. Following Durkheim's classic work, he developed the concept of *emotional energy*, which he argued is released by standardized sequences of interaction called *interaction rituals*. Copresence and mutual focus create a ritual character to interaction. Such occasions create a shared mood, which often feeds back into further interaction through a process that Collins called rhythmic entrainment; basically, interactions tend to be repeated when they produce a shared, positive emotional production and that repetition makes the mood self-perpetuating.

This process has a number of outcomes that are socially important. It creates emotional energy, building group solidarity and creating social boundaries for those who are not involved in the interaction ritual chain. It transforms mundane objects and actions into sacred symbols that have the ability to generate emotional energy on other occasions. Finally, the moral status of the interaction ritual—the objects and actions that it contains—create normative pressures; anger is generated when the moral order created by the group is violated.

Actors who acquire large amounts of emotional energy from ritual encounters are able to claim property and authority. Therefore, individual-level interactions are cumulated to create societal forms. The outcome of the interaction ritual chain is a stratification system, where emotional energy is a resource, capable of being transformed into other, more tangible resources.

Summers-Effler (2002) developed an extension of Collins's theory addressing negative emotional energy such as fear, anxiety, and shame that stems from the inability of individuals to escape interaction rituals in which they have very little power. Often these conditions result in the

adoption of strategies that attempt to minimize the loss of emotional energy rather than maximizing positive emotional energy. Summers-Effler (2004a, 2004b) further extended the theory through the introduction of symbolic interactionist elements in which the self is positioned as a critical element in rituals. The experience of positive emotional energy enhances the sense of self and makes people more likely to commit to group symbols. Conversely, the experience of negative emotional energy decreases self-esteem and consequently reduces the likelihood of committing to group symbols and diminished levels of group solidarity.

Thomas Scheff (1979; Scheff and Retzinger 1992) developed another view of ritual that was rooted in the psychoanalytic tradition. Scheff thought that distressing emotions (such as grief, fear, and anger) are universal because the social situations that produce them are universal. For example, attachment losses (e.g., from parental closeness) produce grief and fear. Scheff assumed that emotional discharge was necessary. Ritual, drama, contests, and other collective emotion-management techniques allowed for the safe discharge of accumulated emotion. While Collins saw interaction ritual chains as generating solidarity and structure at the macrolevel, Scheff saw the rituals as providing a safe outlet for the emotion built up from the common experience of distress. For Scheff, rituals are functional solutions to the problem of repressed emotions, a necessary element of human experience.

The above theories of emotion generally address macro- or group-level phenomena that serve to bind or bond a collectivity in some fashion. The aggregate level of analysis and measurement used in these theoretical traditions tells us little about the individual experience of emotion. Without bridging levels of analyses, neither these more macro theories nor the symbolic interactionist theories can offer a complete understanding of emotion. However, the structure of interaction theories provide us with some understanding of the role that emotion plays at the group level and extends our understanding of emotion as something more than an individual phenomenon.

### Survey Research about the Distribution of Emotions

All sociological theories, with the possible exception of Thomas Scheff's psychoanalytic approach, make the prediction that people occupying different social positions will experience different emotional climates. Survey research on self-reports of social distress show clear patterns that support these predictions (see Mirowsky and Ross 1989). Women report more distress than men, unmarried people report more distress than married people, and the uneducated poor report more distress than people who have more income and education. African Americans and other minorities show somewhat higher levels of distress, although the pattern gets more complicated if we control for their generally lower socioeconomic status. It appears

that some socialization techniques in the minority community are geared to providing protection against some of the negative emotional consequences of minorities' subordinate position. Having children leads to distress in parents; levels of marital satisfaction and well-being drop after a birth and do not return to their prechild levels until after all the children leave home. People who experience undesirable life events (such as loss of a job, death of a spouse, sickness, and accidents) report more distress than those who do not. Those who have little religious faith are more distressed than those who have strong religious beliefs. The young are more depressed and anxious than the middle-aged. Anxiety declines steadily with age, while depression declines from youth to age 55 and then increases again in old age. In general, those who have few network contacts and few social roles are more distressed than those who are better integrated into society (Thoits 1983, 1986).

Clearly, disadvantaged persons have fewer resources to avoid negative events and to respond to misfortunes that do occur. This powerlessness puts them at greater risk of stressful circumstances. Such victimization also leads to depression because of an implied lack of control: While some people may choose to be exploiters, few choose to be victims. In general, the social structural position strongly shapes one's emotional life.

Early survey research by Thoits (1983, 1986) made clear the importance of social networks and social integration for mental health. Peggy Thoits indicates that individuals with fewer network contacts were at greater risk for distress than the well-integrated. However, identity loss and accumulation were shown not to operate in an additive manner but were conditional based on the degree of overlap or segregation in the identity structures of individuals. These results indicate that identity loss is more psychologically distressing when the identities that constitute the identity or self-structure of an individual are less segregated and the individual is more socially integrated. Later work by Thoits (1992) indicated that psychological distress may be less a function of the number of identities held by an individual; rather, psychological distress may be a function of the characteristics of identities. Thoits (1992, 2003) found a significant difference between what she termed *voluntary* and *obligatory* identities. Voluntary identities differ from obligatory identities in that they may be abandoned more readily because other identities are not necessarily dependent on them. As such, a constellation of voluntary role identities may provide protection from general psychological distress as individuals may shed these identities when domain-specific threats present themselves. Moreover, Thoits (1992, 2003) determined that the psychological distress burden was shouldered unevenly by women, due in great part to the obligatory nature of many of their role identities.

A small qualitative study of husbands and wives conducted by Simon (1995) produced findings that paralleled those of Thoits (1992). Simon determined that men and women generally exhibited significant differences in their

feelings about combining work and family roles. While women tended to feel that the combination of role identities from the two structurally separate domains was more psychologically disruptive, men had little cognitive or psychological difficulty merging similar role identities. According to Simon, women felt that committing themselves to work role identities precluded their adequate fulfillment of family role identities. For women, the combination of work and family role identities resulted in negative self-evaluations and feelings of inadequacy, while the same combination produced positive self-evaluations and feelings of self-worth for men. Many of these results were reinforced by a later analysis of national level data (Simon 2002).

While Thoits and Simon are generally measuring levels of distress, stress, or psychological well-being rather than emotion per se, the findings of their research have important implications for emotion research. Stress and distress are constructed as negative occurrences or affective states in survey and medical sociology literatures. As such, generalized negative affective states correspond to frequent experience of more negative emotions. Taken together, the findings of Thoits and Simon bring into sharp relief the potential pitfalls of isolating one or two identities for analysis—a strategy employed in most symbolic interactionist theories of emotion. Moreover, Thoits's research shows the importance of qualitative differences between the general characteristics or time commitments of identities for emotion outcomes, reinforcing the Stryker insight that position within the self-structure is important for the identity-emotion relationship.

## An Assessment of Current Theory and Research

The modern sociological theories of emotion offer comprehensive views of the place that emotions hold in social life. In particular, they articulate a model of the self who feels, the ways in which the social world impacts him or her, how emotions motivate social action, and, cumulatively, how emotional production supports or changes social structures. Experimental, ethnographic, and survey evidence supports the view of emotion as a social as well as an individual phenomenon. We offer four suggestions for the advancement of the sociology of emotions: (1) a repositioning of the importance that biological and/or physiological factors contribute to the production of emotion; (2) a return to central importance of class and gender variations in emotional experience and management; (3) examination of key differences among theories of identity, action, and emotion; and (4) a call for greater interpenetration between the various subfields of the sociology of emotion and sociology as a larger field.

## Biology and Physiology

As sociologists attempted to carve a uniquely sociological niche for the study of emotions in the second half of

the twentieth century, most adopted a theoretical stance that viewed emotions as socially derived and defined. This theoretical position stood in direct opposition to existing psychological and biological theories investigating a complex biological processing of emotion. Because of the early efforts of sociologists to legitimate the sociological investigation of emotion, we believe that the social basis for emotions has gained legitimacy in and outside the discipline. With legitimacy issues resolved and the impressive accumulation of decades of social research, we believe that it is time to engage in a more meaningful discussion of the role of physiology in the production of emotions and the implications of physiological bases of emotions for future social research.

Turner (2000) and Robinson, Rogalin, and Smith-Lovin (2004) represent examples of recent sociologically based attempts to incorporate evolutionary biology or physiology into current accounts of emotion. Turner (2000), taking an evolutionary stance, argues that natural selection processes favored the reproduction of those individuals who were able to appropriately communicate basic emotions through body language. Selection processes “hard-wired” individuals with basic socially useful emotions such as pride, shame, and guilt. Turner draws several important conclusions regarding emotions, evolutionary biology, and physiology. Paramount is his conclusion that emotion researchers must reconsider their theoretical accounts of emotion to include the importance of nonverbal emotion communication, which often occurs outside the conscious realm of social actors. These subliminal emotional gestures, Turner argues, result from rapid chemical reactions that are beyond the control of the individual and are perceived by observers at an unconscious level. The cues resulting from chemical neurological processes occur so rapidly that the notion of internal gestures proposed by Mead (1934) may have lost its fecundity. Ultimately, Turner concludes that the study of interaction and emotion has been truncated by sociologists’ failure to include biological and neurological processes.

Robinson et al. (2004), like Turner, argue that the time is ripe for probing physiological analogs to emotion. In their review of the psychological and physiological literatures, Robinson et al. conclude that there are a variety of measures that could be used to develop sociological theories of emotion. They concentrate on physiological features that have workable measurements in laboratory research and are potentially useful in social psychological experiments. Robinson et al. note that existing sociological theories of emotion, especially affect control theory and identity control theory, use theoretical mechanisms similar to those employed in psychological self-regulation (Carver and Scheier 2000) and self-discrepancy (Higgins 1987, 1989). All of these theories invoke the control system imagery developed by Powers (1973), using theoretical constructs of deflection, discrepancy, or disequilibrium to represent the comparison of system expectations (a reference level) and perceptual reality. The theoretical similarities between the

deflection processes in sociological theories of emotion and psychological theories of self-regulation and discrepancy led Robinson et al. (2004) to argue that there may be physiological analogs to the deflection processes outlined in symbolic interactionist theories of emotion.

To test existing sociological theories of identity and emotion, Robinson et al. argue that sociologists would need to borrow physiological measures that correspond to (1) deflection, disequilibrium, or generalized stress; (2) positively evaluated emotion; (3) negatively evaluated emotion; and (4) potency and activity dimensions of emotional response. These measures, the authors argue, would permit a more stringent test of sociological theories of emotion as well as providing physiological support for existing psychophysiological theories of emotion. Not only would the use of such measures provide important tests for sociological theories of emotion, but their use would further legitimize several decades’ worth of research and theorizing by sociologists of emotion.

In an impressive review of the potential physiological analogs to the experience of emotion, Robinson et al. (2004) offer “evidence that appears to link behavioral, autonomic, and endocrinological responses to deflection, positive affect, negative affect, potency, and activity” (p. 90). Table 1 from Robinson et al. (2004) suggests that cortisol levels, heart rate, blood pressure, and vagal tone should indicate the stress that comes from deflection of identity meanings. Positively and negatively evaluated emotions, as well as the potency and activity of emotional states, may be indicated by the activation of different facial muscles (which can be measured through thermal imaging), as well as more specific elements of blood pressure and heart rate. These potential physiological measures are hypothesized to correspond to the theoretical constructs in control theories of emotion. Current experiments to validate them are promising. We believe that sociologists of emotion will find the theoretical use of physiological ideas key to disentangling some of their *sociological* debates about the relationship between identity confirmation and emotion. These measures, if validated, would subject such theories to more rigorous empirical tests and would permit more precise prediction of emotion production resulting from interaction.

### Emotion Work: The Intersection of Class and Gender

Arlie Hochschild’s (1983) *The Managed Heart* was one of the founding achievements of the sociology of emotion. It inspired two decades of creative, fruitful research projects about feeling rules, their historical evolution, and their effects on social actors’ lives. Despite the fecundity of Hochschild’s original work, we believe that sociologists have largely failed to develop much of the promise of *The Managed Heart* and its implications for class and gender variation in emotion work. Hochschild based her early work on Marx as well as Goffman. We have largely



ignored the tension that she suggested between capitalist and the workers who do emotional labor in the context of their work. We have not pursued the mental health implications that Hochschild argued would come from the alienated labor of emotion workers within such an occupational structure.

To move beyond documentation of the existence of emotional labor in different occupations, we need to study social structural sources of their variation (see Propositions 3, 5, and 6 above) and to study the psychological effects of this labor (Proposition 4). This expansion of our research agenda would require a very different type of research than that which has currently documented emotion work in a large variety of occupations. Hochschild (1983) hints at this in her third and fourth appendices. In the third, she suggests a list of occupations that she thinks will be high on emotional labor and analyzes their sex composition. In the fourth, she lists the socialization practices in the middle or working class that she thinks would lead to different emotion-management styles in those two populations. To generate more evidence about Propositions 3, 5, and 6, we need comparative studies that cover larger parts of the occupational and class structure.

Proposition 4 may prove the most difficult about which to generate evidence. To study whether or not emotional labor had serious psychological effects would demand not only variation in the independent variable (the amount of emotion labor required in one's job) but also careful measurement of the dependent variable. It would be a daunting task to assess this type of emotional distress in a wider population, although specialists in mental health might show us the way.

As a result of our concentration on feeling rules, we have realized only half of the promise that *The Managed Heart* offered. Scholars have learned a great deal about emotion culture, how people learn it, and how they operate to conform to feeling rules and interpret their failures, but we haven't advanced beyond her initial Marxist-inspired insight—that emotion labor exists—to find out more about how it is related to social structure. These questions were the sociological core of her book, what made it a classic in the *sociology* of emotion. Given how much influence the book has had with us using just half of its intellectual contribution, we may get another good 20–30 years out of this influential text by further exploring the largely ignored propositions of *The Managed Heart*.

### Critical Tests of Symbolic Interactionist Theories of Emotion

Due in large part to shared symbolic interactionist roots, affect control theory (Heise 1979; MacKinnon 1994; Smith-Lovin and Robinson 2006) and identity control theory (Burke 1991; Stets 2006) share many common assumptions, principles, and propositions. Theories sharing a common set of assumptions are likely to generate competing hypotheses, as is the case with affect control

theory and identity control theory. The differential predictions and competing hypotheses represent opportunities for crucial tests between the theories.

Both theories predict that emotion results from both confirming and disconfirming situations. Affect control theory and identity control theory agree that negative emotions result when individuals in normal, positive identities do bad things or have bad things done to them. Finally, the theories argue that individuals will act to maintain identities or restore meanings in interaction.

However, their specific predictions regarding the valence of the emotions from some identity-disconfirming events differ. For instance, affect control theory would predict negative emotion resulting from the confirmation of a negative identity, while identity control theory argues that the confirmation of all identities results in positive emotion (even if the identity is negative). Similarly, identity control theory postulates that the disconfirmation of identities, even if reflected appraisals are more positive than expected (e.g., from overreward), is always stressful and produces negative emotions. Conversely, affect control theory emphasizes the valence of meanings in the context of the situation produced by the deflection. For instance, a mother who is evaluated by her friends more positively than she expected would be predicted, by identity control theory, to experience negative emotions, while affect control theory would predict more positive emotions than those associated with the usual, confirming sentiments for that mother identity.

Points of divergence between the two theories represent opportunities for critical tests. However, very few tests of this sort have been undertaken. Stets (2005), Burke and Harrod (2005), and Carter, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin (2006) are exceptions. Two factors have made tests more difficult (Robinson, Smith-Lovin, and Wisecup 2006). The majority of identities are positively evaluated; in confirming situations, both theories make identical predictions regarding emotion with positive identities. The disconfirmation of these positive identities will almost always result in negative emotions under both theories, since deflections from the reference standard are likely to be in the negative direction. However, researchers do not currently have measures that are capable of distinguishing between the stress caused by deflection and the actual negative emotion.

While both theories have enjoyed considerable empirical support, much more work needs to be done to investigate the competing hypotheses generated by both theories as well as the interaction between the general valence of the identity and confirming and disconfirming interactions. Furthermore, a majority of the research in both traditions focuses on the evaluation dimension of meanings almost exclusively. Both identity control theory and affect control theory posit that identity meanings are multidimensional. Affect control theory specifically organizes its mathematical models around three dimensions—evaluation, potency, and activity. Burke (1991) and Stets (2006) explicitly

argue that meanings must be measured in institutional context, with multiple dimensions of relevant distinction developing from that contextual environment. But researchers in both theoretical research programs have conducted virtually all of their studies using the easy-to-measure evaluative responses and ignoring other dimensions of meaning. Clearly, a full development of our understanding of the interrelationship among identity, action, and emotion will require probing beyond the limits of good-bad responses.

### **Interpenetration within and Diffusion from the Sociology of Emotions**

As is clear from this chapter, there are several different approaches to the study of emotion. We believe that there should be more collective effort from researchers using each of these perspectives toward interpenetration and collaboration in an effort to increase the empirical knowledge base about emotions. As we have already mentioned, the use of biological measures may prove useful for measuring deflection processes and affective reactions resulting from interaction. Moreover, the use of biological measures may help to delineate clearly the scope conditions for various theories of emotion (i.e., the range of emotional responses and situations to which the theories apply).

There are also strong links between the cultural treatments of emotion (e.g., Hochschild and Thoits), the social interactional theory of Kemper, and the control theories of identity and emotion (Heise, Burke) that have not been exploited. Clearly, the cultural norms that develop in a cultural system mirror the standard role relationships within that social group. If students are supposed to display deference (or even anxiety) in interacting with teachers in one culture, while showing lively, even combative, engagement in another, these patterns say volumes about the relative status and power of the two roles in those cultures. It is the normative interactions that support the meanings of identities in the symbolic interactionist control theories. Identity control theory would predict that we are motivated to conform to normative patterns because of the positive feelings that they produce. Affect control theory would say that it could generate the feeling rules by showing what emotions were predicted in what interaction settings. In any case, the interrelationships of these theoretical frames have been underexploited. The cultural, the interactional, and the symbolic are all intimately intertwined. The sociologies of emotion could be more explicitly connected to one another.

In fact, the sociological study of emotion is one area where the micro-macro linkage should come easily. Collins's (2004) recent elaboration of his interaction ritual chain theory has revived interest in the Durkheimian and Goffmanian observations about the patterned, institutionalized, sacred character of many everyday activities. Collins argues that copresence, mutual focus, and shared mood lead to emotional energy and group cohesion. The symbolic interactionist theories can help us understand

how the meanings that sacred objects and people obtain through these rituals sustain themselves within a culture. They may also help to explain how the shared mood develops in the first place.

There is also room for more integration between the theoretical treatments of emotion and the researchers who use surveys to measure emotional experience in a way that is generalizable to a larger population. Peggy Thoits (1983, 1986, 2005), with her emphasis linking emotion and mental health, has long looked at the social structural antecedents of negative emotion. She has written consistently about the need to integrate emotions theory and work on mental health (Thoits 1991). More recently, both Simon (2002) and Lively and Heise (2004) have used a module of questions about emotional experience from the 1996 General Social Survey to explore theoretical ideas.

While the various traditions within the sociology of emotions remain somewhat atomized and in need of synthesis, the field has done a better job of diffusing its ideas across sociology. The research and insights of sociologists of emotion contribute in significant ways to new work in exchange theory (Lawler 2001; Lawler and Thye 1999; Lawler, Thye, and Yoon 2000) and status characteristics theory (Lovaglia and Houser 1996). Culture scholars Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) make fruitful use of the emotion work concept in their ethnographic study of how small groups (in their case, suburban activists and bar patrons) reflect and reproduce larger cultural patterns of inequality in their face-to-face interactions. Wilcox (1998) makes use of the same ideas for different purposes in his examination of the relationship between religious ideology and parenting style. These are only a few recent examples of a large and growing pool of sociological research that has taken note of the knowledge produced by sociologists of emotion.

### **CONCLUSION**

The field has done an excellent job of getting past initial disputes about the role of biology in emotion and the use of positivist versus social constructionist methods to study emotions. During the second half of the twentieth century, there has been a remarkable accumulation of theoretical and empirical work both in the sociology of emotions and in subfields such as mental health, social psychology, group processes, culture, and medical sociology. The next challenge will be to foster more interpenetration of these ideas. In most cases, there is no "critical test" because the theoretical approaches are talking about different phenomena. We wish not to dilute the identity of separate perspectives or to necessarily create some grand theory but to ensure that we are maximizing the strides each brings for the overall understanding of the emotions and their place in social life. The key is to recognize what theoretical perspectives have to offer one another and to move on that advantage.

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF FEMININITY

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The sociology of femininity's contemporary terrain is rooted in the eighteenth-century writings of the radical thinker, Mary Wollstonecraft (1792). Her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* criticized the sacrifice of women's potential to "libertine notions of beauty," the acquisition of power through charm and weakness, and perpetual dependence in marriage. Two hundred years later, things were much the same when Simone de Beauvoir (1953) published *The Second Sex* again drawing attention to oppressive feminine beauty standards that were an integral part of the subordination of women. In 1963, Betty Friedan addressed similar worrisome themes in *The Feminine Mystique*, an analysis of a "problem with no name," or the expectation that women "could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity" and that happiness came with devoting oneself to finding a husband and having children (Friedan [1963] 2001:15). A few years later, Jessie Bernard, a sociologist and the first woman professor at Princeton University, would take a more dynamic view of femininity as a set of traits that overlap with masculinity and that vary in time and place (Bernard 1971). In the last three decades, femininity has become a widely researched topic of sociological inquiry that draws primarily on Jessie Bernard's early insights into the flexible and changing nature of femininity but also weaves in contemporary issues of gender, race, and class.

The definition of femininity is an elusive one. Dorothy Smith (1988) puts it well: "the concept itself is implicated in the social construction of the phenomena it appears to describe" (p. 37). She proposes that femininity is best

defined as a set of socially organized relationships between women and between women and men that are mediated by texts. We embrace that definition of femininity in this essay.

Femininity is closely related to conceptualizations of gender relations and gender roles. Scholarship on gender relations usually examines the unequal power relations between women and men (as well as among different groups of women and men based on other axes of inequality such as race, class, sexuality, nationality), at the macro-level of social institutions, as well as on the micro-level of social interaction. Gender scholars define gender roles more narrowly than overall gender relations. Gender roles are the gendered behaviors and actions that are expected of women and men; for example, one "acts feminine" playing the "role" of bride in the United States. Femininity is embedded in gender relations; it is socially constructed, reproduced, and negotiated within the broader context of gender relations and gender roles.

Sociologists examine the construction of femininity as a process of gender role socialization and the ways femininity informs and is informed by social institutions such as the media, sports, medicine, marriage, family, the military, the economy, and the welfare state. Sociologists evaluate the extent to which societal institutions define standards of femininity to which women are expected to conform, as well as the various ways in which individuals and groups of women (and men) resist, challenge, reproduce, and reinforce those standards. Emphasizing the socially constructed nature of femininity, sociologists continue the line of

thinking that began in the 1970s in arguing that femininity is not a static characteristic but a dynamic process. Attention is drawn to the importance of recognizing that an individual's location in time and place, as well as one's race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, intersect in the production of multiple femininities (Collins 2004).

To cover the breadth of the scholarship on femininity, we have organized this chapter into eight sections. We begin with a discussion of the resilience of stereotyped femininity in society. Language and discourse are then presented as crucial sites of the production, negotiation, and resistance to femininity norms. We then examine femininity and the life course, with an emphasis on gender socialization in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and among older women. The relationship between femininity and the body is discussed next, with a focus on beauty standards, medicalization and reproduction, and bodily resistance to femininity. Next, we discuss femininity in the workplace and intersectional and cross-cultural femininities. We end with a discussion of the interdisciplinary nature of the current work in femininity and the directions for fruitful future research.

## THE RESILIENCE OF STEREOTYPED FEMININITY

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Some research has found that attitudes about femininity and gender roles have changed over the past 40 years in the U.S. society and are moving away from traditional stereotypes (Mason, Czajka, and Arber 1976; Mason and Lu 1988; Holt and Ellis 1998). For example, there has been considerable change in women's sex role attitudes between 1964 and 1974, with a decline in traditional sex role stereotyping and an increase in profeminist views among both women and men (Mason et al. 1976:593). The term *gender role* is used in most of the chapter; however, the term *sex role* is used here because it is the term that was used in the articles being cited. The term *sex role* has largely been replaced by *gender role* to draw attention to the fact that these roles are socially constructed. Most sociological research indicates that sex role attitudes and gender stereotypes based on traditional norms of femininity and masculinity have remained relatively stable over the past 40 years. Many studies find that traditional notions of femininity are not only resistant to change but also prevalent in contemporary society (Werner and LaRussa 1985; Bergen and Williams 1991; Street, Kimmel, and Kromrey 1995; Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo, and Lueptow 2001). For example, employing lists of characteristics that represent traits adhered to by contemporary women (such as affectionate, submissive, emotional, sympathetic, and gentle) and men (such as competitive, aggressive, dominant, independent, and ambitious), a recent study that compared people's femininity and masculinity ratings of themselves and others concluded that no change in sex role ratings had occurred from 1974 to

1997 (Lueptow et al. 2001:23). Another study focusing on university students' gender role perceptions found that both men and women still rely on sex-typed perceptions based on societal norms of femininity and masculinity. While seemingly counterintuitive in light of the social changes that have taken place since the 1970s, these findings indicate the remarkable resiliency of traditional notions of femininity and masculinity.

## LANGUAGE AND DISCOURSE

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Language plays a critical role in the construction of femininity, the resilience of feminine stereotypes, and the potential for change. We become gendered through our language and our talk with others. In the arena of linguistic behavior, femininity is constructed through the internalization of sexist language, the normative regulation of speech (such as the adoption of a special ladylike language in girlhood, not swearing and using tag-questions (e.g., I am a good girl, aren't I? The answer is true, right?), learning to be responsive and supportive in cross-sex conversations, and "in matters that really count (learning) to remain relatively quiet" (Schur 1984:58–59).

Language is also significant in challenging and negotiating traditional representations of femininity. Language can be viewed as a collection of discourses, and different discourses allow access to different femininities (some mainstream and some radical), with the meaning of femininity depending on the kind of discourse that engages the word (Coates 1998:301, 318–319). In arguing that "our work begins and ends with language," Dorothy Smith (1993) considers women active participants in the process of creating femininity through "textually-mediated discourse" (p. 91). As a social organization of relationships mediated by printed and visual texts, femininity is a discursive phenomenon that involves the talk women do in relation to texts and the work they do to realize the textual images, such as the deploying of skills needed for shopping, choosing clothes, and making decisions about styles and makeup (p. 163).

## FEMININITY AND THE LIFE COURSE

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The myriad ways that femininity is constructed, manifested, and altered throughout the life course has been the focus of much sociological research. Sociologists have been particularly interested in the construction of femininity in girlhood and adolescence. With a focus on gender socialization, this area of study examines how feminine identities are produced and reproduced in the family, school, and peer group. Parents, siblings, and close family and friends participate in an ongoing process of socializing young people into the family during which the roles and expectations associated with femininity are learned and gender becomes part of one's self-identity (Stockard

1999:215). The production of femininity has also been examined in school settings and peer groups. Standards of masculinity and femininity develop early in childhood peer groups (Kessler et al. 1985), and research has shown that girls achieve popularity based on their physical appearance, social skills, and academic success (Adler, Kless, and Adler 1992). That research also demonstrated that the valued qualities of femininity are not ahistorical but rather reflect changes in society at large.

Not all the research on gender socialization in girlhood and adolescence focus on the unproblematic acquisition of socially acceptable femininity. Some sociological scholarship examines resistance to traditional standards of femininity, focusing on how agency is involved in the process of learning gender (Acker 1992; Lorber 1994; Connell 1995; West and Fenstermaker 1995). For example, some women report that as children they had a keen awareness of the disadvantages of femininity and the privileges of masculinity that encouraged them to self-identify as "tomboys" (Carr 1998:548). Indeed, a large number of U.S. women (possibly even a slight majority) recall being tomboys as children (Rekers 1992).

The media plays a critical role in the gender socialization of women throughout the life course. The role of media is significant in the life course perspective. Thus, much sociological research has focused on the influential role of media images of femininity conveyed to young women through the electronic and print media, particularly television and magazines. Scholars have amassed a large body of literature documenting the content of the messages about femininity that are conveyed by the media (e.g., Ferguson 1983; Roman and Christian-Smith 1988; Ballaster et al. 1991; Douglas 1994; Peril 2002). Others have studied the media consumer's interpretation of the messages and have found that media messages have multiple meanings for the audience, and interpretations reflect normative expectations for femininity and masculinity. Viewers of music television, for example, interpret gendered messages based not only on connections they make between the text and their personal experiences but also on the ideological meaning of femininity, sexuality, and power (Kalof 1993:647). Young women's interpretations of magazine advertisements are also selective, with meanings negotiated and compared to lived experiences (Currie 1997:465). But the dominant ideas about gender roles informs much of the interpretations that young people have of popular culture images of femininity, such as perceiving beautiful and desirable women as in control of men and relationships (Kalof 1993) and making harsh negative judgments of women who do not conform to standard norms of femininity (Currie 1997). Muriel Cantor, a pioneering sociologist of popular culture, concluded that all genres portray women as essentially traditional in their desire for romance and marriage and that happiness depends on having a heterosexual relationship (1987:210).

Since most women become involved in long term relationships with men and typically marry in their twenties

and thirties, scholarship on femininity and adult women has often focused on femininity in the context of marriage, such as the division of household labor (e.g., Brines 1994), the relationship between femininity and male spousal aggression (e.g., Boye-Beaman, Leonard, and Senchak 1993), and the relationship between femininity and decision making in marital relationships (e.g., Komter 1989). Norms of femininity and masculinity play a crucial role in the negotiation of household labor. For example, young boys learn early in their gender identity development that the primary definition of masculinity is that which is not feminine or involved with women, and this has important consequences for later division of household labor (Brines 1994: 683). While breadwinning women have less "compensatory" work to do to maintain their femininity, dependent husbands must work hard to maintain their masculinity, explaining why, despite the increasing numbers of women in the workforce, the division of household labor still leans toward more work for women (Brines 1994).

Sociologists have also examined the role of femininity in mediating male spousal aggression. In studying the relationship between gender identity and aggression in marital relationships, Boye-Beaman et al. (1993) measured femininity levels (primarily expressiveness and concern for interpersonal relationships) of both husbands and wives. They found that higher levels of femininity among white husbands tempered husbands' aggression. But for black couples, higher levels of femininity and/or masculinity *among wives* tempered husbands' aggression (Boye-Beaman et al. 1993:312). Other family role intricacies in the domain of femininity and masculinity have been studied by sociologists. For example, Komter (1989) found that while in most couples both partners claimed that decisions were made jointly, egalitarian relations were in fact very rare, and stereotypical feminine and masculine roles played out by husbands and wives perpetuated gendered inequality in marital decision-making processes.

Femininity in later life has also been of some interest to scholars, with most of the research focused on body image among older women. Older women have been found to internalize ageist beauty norms (Hurd 2000). Furthermore, some research reports a double standard of aging in which women view aging negatively in terms of its impact on appearance, while men are either neutral or positive about the impact of aging on appearance (Halliwell and Dittmar 2003). In one of the few ethnographic studies of femininity in older women, Frida Furman (1997) studied beauty shop culture. She found that older women were committed to traditional femininity and beauty standards and sought attractive appearances to achieve social status and acceptability. However, older women's experiences in beauty shops were also marked by resistance to sexist and ageist norms, providing a place for reaffirmation and social support in the struggle against the larger society's devaluation of aging women's bodies.

## FEMININITY AND THE BODY

The social construction of the female body is a crucial site of femininity and is situated primarily in standards of beauty, the medicalization of the female body, and women's reproductive processes.

### Beauty Standards

As we noted in the introductory remarks, femininity has long been associated with physical beauty and what specific cultures consider to be ideal female characteristics. From a sociological standpoint, beauty standards are critical areas of inquiry, and sociologists in the 1970s and 1980s challenged strict beauty standards and the social emphasis on women's beauty to the exclusion of other attributes. Sociologists have argued that feminine beauty standards, often referred to as the "beauty mystique," were unnecessary, time consuming, unhealthy, degrading, futile and made women feel badly about themselves (Greer 1971; Baker 1984; Brownmiller 1984; Lakoff and Scherr 1984).

Scholarship on beauty standards not only describes the exemplars themselves but also how they influence women, men and relationships. In the early 1990s, Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* ([1991] 2002) and Susan Bordo's *Unbearable Weight* (1993) reinvigorated interest in the myriad ways that beauty standards and femininity norms harm women with their compelling arguments about the resilience of beauty standards among even the most successful U.S. women and the pernicious nature of the ideal of slenderness in the cultural construction of femininity.

There is substantial ethnic and racial diversity in the perception of body image. For example, Caucasian and Hispanic American college students have been found to be more concerned about weight-related body image than African Americans or Asian Americans (Altabe 1996). A study of a national sample of women found that while Latinas and white women were similar in their concerns about embodied femininity and weight, black women were significantly less concerned about body weight than the other women in the sample (Bay-Cheng et al. 2002). Some of the explanations offered for black women's uniqueness in perceptions of the ideal feminine body include the argument that black women have a more realistic perception of what men consider attractive in women, while Caucasian women had the most distorted views (Demarest and Allen 2000) and that black women's satisfaction with their overall appearance had more to do with skin color than body weight or shape (Bond and Cash 1992). Bond and Cash's findings suggest that due to a racialized hierarchy of beauty standards in the United States and in many other societies, black women may be more concerned with their skin color in terms of "the lighter the better" than with issues of weight or shape. Weight/shape issues might preoccupy white women more because they see their own skin color reconfirmed as the standard image of beauty.

## Medicalization and Reproduction

Much of the sociological scholarship on the medicalization of the female body is based on the work of Michel Foucault (1977) whose theory of the body is particularly relevant to viewing femininity as an oppressive cultural expectation for women. According to Foucault (1977), the body is

involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs . . . it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination. (Pp. 25–26)

Indeed, as Judith Butler (1993) reminds us, the link between femininity and materiality, or the physical body, comes from the association of matter with the womb and thus with reproduction (p. 31). Thus, within the mind/body duality that permeates Western societies, masculinity has been equated with abstract thought (a detachment from the material), and femininity has been associated with the materiality and the body. A cultural analysis of biological reproduction, what Donna Haraway (1989) has called "reproductive politics" (p. 352), has been an area of intense scholarly inquiry. Nancy Chodorow examined how female mothering and child care reproduce feminine and masculine personality and roles in *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) and in *A Difference Voice* (1982). Carol Gilligan described how society's public affirmation of the right to birth control and abortion brings women who exercise fertility control choices into conflict with conventions of femininity. Emily Martin analyzed how women's reproduction is culturally constructed through the language of medicine in *The Woman in the Body* (1992), and Terri Kapsalis (1997) in *Public Privates* described the performance of femininity during gynecological examinations and how femininity, pathology, and performance are linked to women's reproduction through the concept of hysteria, a word derived from the Latin *hysterus*, or uterus (pp. 16–17).

Building on these insights, sociologists have studied the interaction between cultural norms of femininity and the definition and treatment of medical illnesses, such as eating disorders, cosmetic surgery, and hormonal and psychotherapeutic drug treatments. A number of scholars have challenged the gendered construction of illness that reflects and reiterates societal notions of femininity (Bordo 1993; Van Den Wijngaard 1997; Weitz 1998; Lorber and Moore 2002). In his work on gender and stigma, Edwin Schur (1984) argues that medical definitions of mental illness often label women deviant because they do not live up to cultural norms of femininity. For example, in analyzing the social construction of premenstruation, menstruation, and menopause, Lorber and Moore (2002) conclude that when defined as illnesses, these normal (in the sense that almost all women experience them) stages of womanhood are turned into syndromes that lead to hormonal treatments

and psychiatric drugs that are used to rationalize the subordinate status of women due to their “feminine troubles” (p. 89). Furthermore, the omnipresent treatment of women’s bodily cycles as illnesses encourages the labeling of all women as potentially incapacitated and emotionally uncontrolled (p. 90), stereotypes that reinforce the cultural construction of women as emotional, fragile, incapacitated, and dangerous. Van Den Wijngaard’s (1997) *Reinventing the Sexes* demonstrates how dominant scientific explanations of sex differences from the 1960s through the 1980s were based on prevailing notions of femininity and masculinity. For example, the argument that the presence of male hormones in men leads to sexual aggression and action-orientation and the absence of male hormones in women leads to sexual receptiveness, passivity, and the desire for motherhood is evidence that medical science draws on binary images of masculinity and femininity.

### Resistance to Hegemonic Femininity

The sociology of sport is one of the primary areas in which the body is examined as a site of resistance to feminine body standards. Challenging the dominant male model of sport, scholars have examined the ways in which female athletes have negotiated the traditional standards of femininity, particularly in developing their bodies in ways that are decidedly active, strong, and controlled (Cole 1993; Hall 1993; Loy, Andrews, and Rinehart 1993; Hargreaves 1994; Mikosza and Phillips 1999). However, the “sportswoman” is often portrayed as a paradox because women live in two cultures with conflicting ideals, the sport culture and the larger social culture (Krane et al. 2004:1).

Some sportswomen bring issues of beauty norms and body standards to the forefront, with research documenting that the female athletes have better body images, eating habits, and self-esteem than do women who do not participate in sports (Miller et al. 1999). Alternatively, other studies report that the competitive sports environment and the contradictory messages from sports norms and social norms promote unhealthy body image, eating disorders, and excessive exercising (Johns 1996; Krane 1997). Sociologists have also examined women’s resistance to and negotiation of femininity through purposeful alterations to their bodies in “body projects,” such as tattooing (Shilling 1993; Woodward 1997; Williams and Bendelow 1998; Featherstone 2000; Atkinson 2002). The sociological literature on tattooing and other nonconformist body projects argues that these activities are undertaken by women precisely because they resist hegemonic femininity and beauty norms (Butler 1990; Mifflin 1997; DeMello 2000).

Finally, while femininity is traditionally examined in terms of its inscription on female bodies, some scholars examine men who purposely perform femininity. This scholarship emphasizes Simone de Beauvoir’s argument

that one is not born a woman, but rather, one *becomes* a woman (1953:301). For example, scholars have focused on the ways that men construct femininity through nontraditional gender performances, arguing that feminine men not only resist and negotiate gender norms (Butler 1990; Tyler 2003) but also racism and homophobia (Barrett 1999). On the other hand, it is argued that in their performances some black men are obsessed with a fetishized version of femininity that is white, privileging the femininity of ruling-class white women (hooks 1992).

### FEMININITY IN THE WORKPLACE

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In addition to the scholarship on the construction of the feminine body, sociologists have also examined the role of femininity in a broad range of social institutions, such as education (e.g., Adler et al. 1992), the military (e.g., Cock 1994), the welfare state (e.g., Orloff 1996), family and marriage (e.g., Boye-Beaman et al. 1993), and the media (e.g., Hollows 2000). Since much of our discussion thus far has been engaged with the construction of femininity in the media, the family and in education, we will focus here on femininity norms in relation to the military and the welfare state.

The military and the welfare state are similar in their incorporation and reproduction of cultural norms of femininity through the processes of exclusion, entitlement, and stigma. Militarization in a society is gendered in a way that reflects broader societal norms of femininity and masculinity. In the process of mobilizing resources for war, a distinction between the defended and the defenders shapes both militarism and sexism, with women largely excluded from the role of protector and always cast in the role of the protected (Cock 1994:152). Militarization and war are institutionalized ways in which men reaffirm their masculine role as protector and defender, and the exclusion of women from combat is absolutely necessary to maintain the “ideological structure of patriarchy” based on dichotomous notions of femininity and masculinity (p. 168). Much like the military, the welfare state is also an institution that is informed by and in turn informs norms of femininity (and masculinity), embodying traditional gender ideologies and creating gendered citizenship (Gordon and Fraser 1994; Knijn 1994; Orloff 1996). The welfare system not only treats men and women differently, rendering men independent as wage earners and women dependent as family members that need support, the programs targeted to women tend to carry more negative social stigmas than those targeted to men (Orloff 1996).

### INTERSECTIONAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL FEMININITIES

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Studying the ways that femininity intersects with race, class, and gender has been particularly important sociological

work (Collins 2004; Lovejoy 2001; Pyle 1996; Thompson and Keith 2001). Scholars have emphasized race as a fundamental organizing principle that interacts with other inequalities in the shaping of gendered individuals (Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill 1996). For example, in her intersectional analysis of working-class and middle-class notions of femininity for black women, Patricia Hill Collins (2004) argues that the dominant media images depict black femininity negatively, representing working-class African American women as “bitches” and “circulating images of black women’s promiscuity” (p. 137). For middle-class black women, the media conveys messages about their potential for *not* becoming working class, and the message of femininity for middle-class African American women is that “they must somehow figure out a way to become Black ‘ladies’ by avoiding these working-class traps. . . . Doing so means negotiating the complicated politics that accompany this triad of bitchiness, promiscuity, and fertility” (p. 139).

Another important development in the sociology of femininity is the cross-cultural scholarship that examines femininity in a wide range of international contexts, such as Indonesia (Sears 1996), Puerto Rico (Crespo 1991), Southern India (Niranjana 2001), and South Africa (Mindry 1999). Scholars have also focused on the construction of femininity in multiethnic contexts, such as Chinese schoolgirls in Great Britain (Archer and Francis 2005) and Asian women in America (Creff 2004). Cross-cultural scholarship emphasizes the notion of femininities that not only depends on gender, race, class, and sexuality differences but are also geographically, spatially, and culturally specific. Scholars have examined the construction of femininities in a global context as reflections of local gender inequalities (Laurie et al. 1999), in terms of the psychological dimensions of cross-cultural femininities (Hofstede et al. 1998), and in connection with the culturally and geographically specific constructions of femininity in space and on the body (Niranjana 2001). Much of this scholarship focuses on how femininity has been constructed in contexts of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization. For example, Sears (1996) discusses the role of colonialism and imperialism in the production of Indonesian femininities. In a postcolonial, postmodern world, Westerners often perceive Indonesian women as exotically feminine, particularly in representations of popular tourist spots such as Bali (p. 3). The idealized Western romantic stereotype of women from exotic lands has been linked to colonialism by scholars from a wide range of disciplines, including performance studies and anthropology (e.g., Lutz and Collins 1993; Desmond 1999).

## INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP ON FEMININITY

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As noted above, femininity has been studied in a wide range of interdisciplinary arenas. Art historians have

examined how visual images depict women watching themselves being looked at by men (Berger 1972), and English scholars have studied the objectification of women in representations of the beautiful feminine corpse (Bronfen 1992). Philosophers have written on the role of femininity in aesthetics and fashion and the ways that gender, race, and sexual orientation inform the concept of beauty (Brand 2000). Ethnographers of girlhood educational processes have examined the influence of peer group reinforcement of femininity in an anthropological framework (Holland and Eisenhart 1990) and the discourses that define female sexuality and embodiment from the view of communications and women’s studies (Gonick 2003). Psychologists have worked on the measurement of femininity, masculinity, and androgyny (Bem 1974) and the identification of women’s symbolic images of femininity and sex (Ussher 1997). Cultural historians have studied many aspects of the changing constructions of femininity over time, such as the image of the beautiful woman over 200 years in America (Banner 1983).

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIP ON FEMININITY

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There is great potential for the future directions of scholarship on femininity both within the discipline of sociology and through interdisciplinary scholarship. There is a need for more research on femininities cross-culturally. Issues of the body and health, particularly diseases that affect women’s reproductive health such as breast, cervical, and ovarian cancers, are areas that need more examination in terms of their relation to norms of femininity. For example, the popular media discourse about breast cancer revolves around femininity and standards of beauty, sexuality, and motherhood. The increasing normalization of cosmetic surgery in many Western countries is also an area that requires more scholarship with regard to its role in amplifying feminine beauty standards among women of all ages.

In terms of resistance to and renegotiation of the socio-cultural norms of femininity, scholarship on men performing femininity and women performing femininity in nontraditional ways is also crucial. Rupp and Taylor’s (2003) recent publication, *Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret*, is an example of the type of work that expands our understanding of femininity and masculinity as cultural performances and uncouples the performance of femininity with women and of masculinity with men.

Constructions of femininity continue to change. Donna Haraway (1989) has written that images of woman and the feminine body as linked to reproduction, motherhood, and domesticity are in decline in “nearly every discursive arena, from popular culture to legal doctrine” (p. 352). She argues that there is nothing about being female that is true for all women and that the discursive nature of womanhood and femininity leads to the recognition of the



importance of creating coalitions among women who are not afraid of “partial identities and contradictory standpoints” (Haraway 1991:154–155). Not surprised that the concept of woman becomes elusive just as the networks between people on the planet have become multiple and complex, Haraway envisions a cyborg form that transforms femininity and women’s experiences, a “creature in a post-gender world” (pp. 149, 150, 160). For example, women of color have a cyborg identity, a subjectivity constructed from the merger of multiple “outsider identities” (p. 174).

Audre Lorde (1984), an early champion of forging a community of differences, wrote that survival depends on making connections with others identified as outside and different to refashion “a world in which we can all flourish . . . learning how to take our differences and make them strengths” (p. 112). Gender, femininity and masculinity are at the center of classifications of difference, but what is needed is a theory of difference that is not binary since us-them discourses justify oppression and domination (Haraway 1991).

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF FRIENDSHIP

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Traditionally, friendship has received little systematic attention from sociologists. The issue of social integration has of course been central to the discipline since its origins in the nineteenth century, but until recently friendship itself was rarely seen as anything but peripheral to the major issues that defined the subject. Indeed, in this regard, a concern for friendship lapsed far behind a focus on family and community organization. It was these twin concerns that from an early phase of the discipline's history shaped the ways in which sociologists addressed the topic of informal solidarities. Communities and families were understood to have significance as sustained forms of social institutions. Even though their patterning was subject to the transformative processes of nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrialization, they were understood to be of greater structural consequence than the far more individualized and prosaic ties of friendship.

In the absence of any explicit concern with developing a distinct sociology of friendship, it was family and community studies—especially the latter—that provided most knowledge about the social organization and consequence of friendship and other similar ties. The data generated and the consequent analyses were often quite limited, but to the degree that they explored the range of informal solidarities in which people were involved, they necessarily paid heed to the commitments that existed between nonkin others and the patterning of sociability that occurred within a

locality. Thus it is possible to interrogate many older community and family studies to reveal at least the key elements behind the dominant forms of informal relationships that existed (see, e.g., Allan 1979). It was, however, rare indeed for any of these studies to explore the broader significance of friendship or the part these ties played in sustaining or challenging social order.

A recognizable sociology of friendship only really began to develop as an area of significant interest in the 1970s. The work of two renowned scholars was particularly influential in encouraging sociologists to take friendship seriously and treat it as more than just a personal relationship of little social consequence. The first of these was Eugene Litwak (Litwak 1960a, 1960b, 1985, 1989; Litwak and Szelenyi 1969). His long-term interest in primary group structures led him to explore the different types of support and exchange that different members of people's personal networks were best suited and most able to provide. In particular, in distinguishing between family, neighbors, and friends as categories of informal relationship that were based on different modes of solidarity and structurally capable of meeting different contingencies, he highlighted the idea that friendship in its different guises was of consequence socially as well as individually. He was one of the first sociologists to emphasize the role that ties of amity played in sustaining routine social organization, although a number of social anthropologists were also

exploring the importance of such ties in their analyses of urban lifestyles (see, e.g., Mitchell 1969).

The second scholar whose work did much to foster the emergence of a recognized sociology of friendship was Beth Hess. In two highly influential papers (Hess 1972, 1979), she effectively outlined the parameters for the development of a sociology of friendship. She was one of the first sociologists to recognize that friendship patterns were liable to be influenced by the social roles an individual occupied. She was particularly aware of the interplay of gender and age on this, although she also recognized the significance of class and other aspects of social location. In addition, Hess explored the wider role that friendship played in social life. Rather than just seeing it as a voluntary relationship engaged in for its own sake, she emphasized its functional consequences for role performance and the part it could play in the construction of social identity.

Over the last 30 years, the seeds sown by these scholars have resulted in the sociology of friendship receiving far more acknowledgment as a legitimate field of enquiry within the discipline. As with other such developments, this shift can be seen within a broader sociological context. Many analyses of the social transformations of late modernity have emphasized processes of individualization involving the relative decline of more traditional collective social institutions. Within the emergent social patterns characteristic of the era, individuals are seen as having increased opportunities for constructing social identities and “narratives of the self.” No longer is their lifestyle—or indeed their life course—as settled or determined by aspects of their structural location as it once was. Of course, the extent of the freedoms individuals have here is itself related to structural location; it is also easy to overemphasize. Yet the pervading sense is that individuals have greater control over the ordering of their lives than in previous times. This choice extends to the construction of personal networks, with direct consequences for the significance of more “chosen” or “voluntary” ties such as friendships. In turn, policy debates have also begun to emphasize the importance of issues such as social capital and social exclusion, thereby also highlighting the increased significance of informal associations for people’s well-being.

This chapter focuses on a number of the issues that have been at the core of the sociology of friendship over the last 20 years. After examining the rise of friendship as a form of relationship within industrialized, Western culture, it explores how patterns of friendship are consequent on wider features of social structure, arguing that people’s structural location routinely shapes the organization of their friendships. It also examines the “space” there is for friendship in people’s lives, who is eligible for friendship, and what the consequences of this are. It then turns to a discussion of the role of friendship in identity construction and examine more fully the issues raised earlier about the increased salience of friendship and other ties of amity in contemporary life.

First though, it is necessary to consider briefly what we consider the term *friend* to mean in this chapter. Definitions of the concept are more complex than they first appear because *friend* is an evaluative term rather than a categorical one. In other words, unlike neighbors, colleagues, or siblings, friends are recognized as such on the basis of subjective judgments of the quality of the relationship they sustain; there are no clear-cut external criteria that can be used to determine whether someone qualifies as a friend. This, of course, does not mean that judgments are wholly arbitrary; common cultural criteria certainly shape decisions, although none of these are wholly necessary for a relationship to be classified by one or both of those involved as a friendship. Equally, these criteria may be present, yet those involved choose a term other than *friend* to characterize their tie. To complicate the issue further, the criteria involved in friendship can be applied more or less strictly, depending on the context within which the term is being used. Bearing all these caveats in mind, this chapter is essentially going to focus on nonkin ties that involve a comparatively high degree of liking and solidarity, generally incorporating elements of shared sociability and broad reciprocity of exchange (Allan 1989; Pahl 2000).

## DEVELOPING A SOCIOLOGY OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is often portrayed as a rather timeless relationship. In particular, reference to philosophical discussions of the true nature of friendship, including Aristotle’s distinctions between friends of pleasure, friends of utility, and friends of virtue, often implies that “true” friendship has an unchanging character (Bukowski, Nappi, and Hoza 1987; Pakaluk 1991). Yet such a position is essentially asociological. Whatever the characteristics of “true” friendship are taken to be, those characteristics are likely to be shaped by the socioeconomic conditions under which the ideal is being constructed. More important, the patterning of friendships more generally, whether or not they approach some idealized model, will be shaped by the forms of social life that are emergent at the time within the culture in question. In other words, ties of amity are not universal or fixed; the friendships that individuals have are certainly shaped by personal factors—which themselves will reflect the structural circumstances of people’s lives—but equally they will be patterned by the ways in which friendship is socially constructed within their culture.

Various anthropologists have made this point in their analyses of patterns of amity in different cultures. The papers in Bell and Coleman (1999), greatly influenced by Paine’s (1969) seminal work, provide good examples of this (see also Leyton 1974). Silver’s (1990) analysis of the development of friendship in eighteenth-century Britain is particularly pertinent for present purposes. He argues that only with the emergence of an industrial economy was friendship in its modern guise possible. Before this, social

and economic organization privileged family and kinship solidarities to such a degree that trust between unrelated others was effectively outside the realm of possibility. Distrust rather than trust governed these ties, not as a result of personal judgment but as a consequence of the structural formation in which they were embedded. It was only as the economy altered, replacing personal connection with greater contractual regulation, that “space” was generated for ties of friendship lying outside any instrumental concerns (see also Oliner 1998; Pahl 2000). This does not mean that family and kinship ties became unimportant. As research has consistently shown, family ties continue to be of major consequence in most people’s lives, although how those relationships are ordered also changes over time. The key point being made here is that personal relationships of all forms, be they kin or nonkin, are structurally embedded and consequently impinged on by their broader social and economic context.

If the premise of these arguments is accepted, it follows more generally that the space there is in people’s lives for friendship will be influenced by structural circumstances lying outside the friendships. (Indeed, the idea that friendship as a form of relationship is somewhat “dissociated” from other areas of life is itself one that only “makes sense” within particular social formations.) Thus, how ties of amity are patterned, what exchanges occur within them, what solidarities are developed, where they are enacted, etc., are not solely issues of individual volition. Agency matters of course, but so too do the structural circumstances under which that agency is exercised. For example, long-standing debates about the decline of community and the decreased significance of local relationships in social life clearly incorporate the idea that different forms of solidarity emerged between nonkin (and also between kin) consequent on changed patterns of employment or residence.

It is equally apparent that other structural factors in people’s lives have a bearing on the ways in which individual friendships and, as important, their overall personal networks are patterned (see Blieszner and Adams 1992; Ueno and Adams 2006 for summaries of research documenting how structural factors shape personal friendship networks). For example, given the overall significance of gender in shaping the opportunities that men and women have, as well as the part that masculinity and femininity play in the construction of identity, it would be surprising if ties of friendship were not influenced by gender (see Adams and Ueno 2006 for a discussion of the research findings regarding the effects of gender on friendship). So too class location and the resultant material resources available to individuals and families for socializing and servicing ties of amity will have an impact on the patterning of their friendships, although exactly how this operates will vary across time and space (Walker 1995). Age and life course stage are further factors that can be recognized quite readily as having an impact on people’s friendship networks. Young children, teenagers, and adults at different

phases of the life course all have different opportunities and constraints influencing their friendships (Hartup and Stevens 1997, 1999; Levitt 2000; Sherman, de Vries, and Lansford 2000). Similarly, life course transitions such as widowhood and divorce frequently lead to a substantial reordering of friendship networks.

The point at issue here is not so much the detail of how patterns of amity are influenced by particular structural factors. Rather the issue is that modes of friendship are inevitably shaped by the circumstances in which they are enacted. At a macro level, different social and economic formations foster different ideas of appropriate exchange and involvement in nonkin associations, as Silver’s analysis demonstrated. But equally, it is important to recognize that at any time there will be differences in the ways ties of amity are organized, depending on the other commitments people have and the resources that are available. Put simply, the sociology of friendship developed as a consequence of this explicit recognition that these ties were shaped by structural, and not just individual, characteristics. It grew further as analysts began to perceive these ties as being of social rather than just personal consequence, a matter that will be discussed further in the following.

To argue that structural characteristics are important here is to say nothing more than that friendship in its different guises, like all forms of relationship, is patterned by the contexts in which it is located. Rather than standing alone, somehow set apart from other features of social and economic life, it too is integrally bound into the organization and rhythms of social structure. In an earlier work, we (Adams and Allan 1998) attempted to identify some of the different levels through which context patterned friendship interaction and, indeed, the forms that friendship took. We identified four broad levels: the *personal environment* level, the *network* level, the *community* level, and the *societal* level. These levels are not independent of each other but represent a contextual continuum that collectively provides the social and economic canvas against which ties of friendship are—or of course are not—developed.

The personal environment level refers to the more immediate features of a person’s life that influence the opportunities and space they have for developing and servicing ties of amity. This would include the material resources they have available for sociability as well as their domestic and work obligations. These in turn will be influenced by the individual’s socioeconomic location, including class, gender, ethnicity, and life course position. While the network level is closely linked to the personal environment level, it refers to the overall configuration of personal ties that an individual sustains—with whom he or she mixes, the character of the exchanges involved, and the links there are between the others in the network. Some individuals are involved in larger personal networks than others; some have networks in which family and kin are more central than nonkin; some have denser networks in which many of those involved also know each other.

Moreover, in line with the basic premise of network analysis, the configuration of these networks will have an independent influence on the freedoms that people have to construct and service their friendships and the constraints acting on them (see Adams and Blieszner 1994).

The third level of context that Adams and Allan identified was the community level. This refers to the conventional practices for “doing” friendship and other such ties that develop in the social environments in which the individual is involved. Linked to the previous two levels but analytically distinct from them, it concerns the ways in which normative and cultural understandings of what ties of amity involve are constructed, sustained, and sanctioned within a given cultural milieu. Analytically, these milieus may at times be thought of as relatively bounded—a particular neighborhood or form of community; at other times, the reference may be to broader cultural patterns—for example, specific class-based or ethnic practices. The final level of context identified was the societal level. This is the level most removed from the individual and refers to the manner in which the dominant social and economic formation fosters different patterns of association. A good illustration of this is provided in Silver’s (1990) analysis of the impact on trust and amity of eighteenth-century developments in commercial practice, as discussed earlier.

We do not intend to augment these arguments about context any further here. In what follows, however, we will draw on these different levels of context in framing our discussion of major themes that have emerged within the sociology of friendship.

## STRUCTURAL LOCATION

Some of the earliest work in friendship research was concerned with mapping out the impact on friendship of different structural aspects of people’s lives—in the language used previously, how variations in personal environment affect friendship. As would be expected, this remains a key topic within the sociology of friendship.

### Class

One concern has been with the consequences of class or socioeconomic status on friendship patterns. While there is a danger of reifying differences between classes (and other social groupings), in general middle-class people appear to have more extensive and involved friendship networks than do people in working-class positions (Walker 1995; Willmott 1987). Some of this difference may be a consequence of how ties of amity are culturally constructed (Allan 1998a), which itself is influenced by the resources people have available for socializing. Generally, people with fewer resources are likely to develop different patterns of exchange and participation than those with more. This is not just a matter of income, important though financial resources are. It is also influenced by cultural

practices associated with different class locations. For example, how the home is culturally defined by different classes, who has access to it when, and which aspects of it are “revealed” are all likely to influence the ways in which sociable ties are allowed to develop (Allan 1998b; Marks 1998). More studies are needed that pay heed to people’s overall material circumstances, linking these to other aspects of their personal environment that have an impact on their patterns of sociability.

### Gender

Research has also been concerned with exploring differences in men’s and women’s friendships. Some of this has examined the “content” of male and female friendships—what men and women do with their friends and how masculinities and femininities affect this. Linking in strongly with traditional themes in the socialization literature, the dominant argument has been that women are more emotionally expressive in their interaction with their friends, whereas men tend to spend time with their friends in more “active,” and often more public, pursuits. While rightly recognizing the dangers of overemphasizing gender differences per se, Wright’s (1982) classic account of men’s friendships tending to be more “side-by-side” as against women’s more “face-to-face” ties still represents the essence of this argument well. It is very much in line with wider debates about the gendered nature of intimacy and of the significance of disclosure in male and female relationships (see Duncombe and Marsden 1993; Wood 1993).

Other research has explored the space men and women have available in their lives to service different friendships. In part, this is about the gendered organization of leisure, but it is also about the routine scheduling of competing activities and responsibilities. While life course phase is important within this, the main focus is on how different forms of work constrain the time and financial resources available for servicing friendships. Traditionally, the division of domestic responsibilities has given men more free time and money than it has given women to engage with others and service their friendships, especially outside the home. A number of caveats are needed here though. First, such portrayals are premised on assumptions about the ordering of relational and domestic partnerships, which with changing demography are becoming less dominant than they were, certainly across the life course. Second, while (some) women may have more constrained opportunities for engaging in external sociable activities than do men, as discussed earlier, some characteristic elements of femininity seem better suited to managing and servicing friendships.

Friendship *between* men and women is one area where there is a need for more research (Monsour 2002). While most friendships—aside possibly from those involving couples—tend to be gender-specific (in line with issues of status homogeneity discussed in the following), there are arguments that cross-gender friendships are becoming more common. Key questions in much of the literature

concern whether such relationships can be kept platonic and whether this is important (Fehr 2004). The same issue of the legitimate sexual parameters of friendship is also now being posed in a different form. With the changing demography of partnership, not only are present partners often defined as friends, but so too some past partners are sometimes redefined as “just friends.” Equally, there are interesting questions to be asked about “friends with benefits” (i.e., people who clearly define each other as friends rather than sexual or romantic partners but who nonetheless occasionally engage in sexual activity together).

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity has received far less attention in the friendship literature than either gender or class. In the United States some studies have focused on how different cultural identities pattern the nature of friendship solidarities, although often this also entails aspects of class and material disadvantage. However, most studies of cultural difference in informal relationships have been concerned principally with kinship solidarities, with friendship being a secondary concern. Within some of these though, especially those taking an ethnographic approach, the importance of nonkin connections in people’s lives becomes apparent—Duneier (1992), Liebow (1967), and Stack (1974) are classic examples here. Similarly, in Britain, research focusing on community boundaries and identity construction among different ethnic groups, especially South Asian and Afro-Caribbean groups, sometimes includes material relevant to friendships, although family and kinship ties are generally more central within the analyses (Hahlo 1998; Hall 2002; Modood, Beishon, and Virdee 1994).

The most important ethnically oriented research for the sociology of friendship are studies of migration. From the early days of the Chicago School, sociologists have examined the emergent patterns of integration following migration to new localities. Key issues included the ways different incoming groups were “insulated” within the host environment and how they drew on informal associations to both protect themselves and further their social and economic interests (e.g., Fong and Isajiw 2000). For many migrant groups facing hostility from the location’s more settled population, the ethnically concentrated networks of others that emerged provided both formal and informal resources that could be used against the exclusionary practices of others. Within this, ties of affinity became a significant means by which individuals could help protect themselves as well as sustain and honor their cultural traditions, traditions that for many become symbolically more important in the face of migration and opposition. While kinship connection usually takes precedence in this, patterns of friendship and nonkin association can also be important. Moreover, the changing pattern of interethnic friendship is revealing of the degree of closure or acceptance between once diverse groups.

## Sexual Orientation

Until recently, questions about the impact of sexual orientation were absent from the sociological literature on friendship. However, with the increased legitimacy given alternative forms of sexuality, the significance of friendship within gay and lesbian lifestyles has become a topic of significant interest. Nardi’s (Nardi 1999; Nardi and Sherrod 1994) work has been particularly influential in this. As with other friendship circles, gay and lesbian friendship networks tend to be relatively homogeneous, at least when the individuals involved are “out.” Covert gay and lesbian individuals, on the other hand, often try to ensure that knowledge of their sexuality remains hidden by deliberately not associating with others who share their sexual orientation. Some of the most interesting research in this area involves how personal networks are managed when some individuals know about a person’s gay or lesbian sexuality but others do not. While this is often a division between natal family and friends, ensuring “nondiscovery” by those who do not know requires continuing vigilance over interactions involving different segments of the network (Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001).

Research has also shown that gay and lesbian persons often attach a greater importance to their friendships than is common among straight individuals, in part because of a history of familial rejection over their sexuality (Weeks et al. 2001). The concept of “families of choice” is a powerful means of expressing this, with its insistence that traditional kinship connection is not necessarily the basis of an individual’s most significant, enduring, or intimate relationships (Weston 1991). For some, friends can be just as important in providing reliable long-term personal, emotional, and material support. Here, *friendship* takes on a meaning different from that found in most studies of “heterosexual normativity” (Roseneil 2005; Roseneil and Budgeon 2004).

## Life Course

There has been little longitudinal research that examines friendship behavior over the life course (Pahl and Pevalin 2005). Studies that take a life course perspective tend instead to focus on particular life phases, especially childhood, adolescence, and later life, or particular transitions, such as marriage, having children, divorcing, or becoming widowed (Feld and Carter 1998; Kalmijn 2003). Within childhood, research has focused on such topics as how children’s friendships alter as they age, the class and gender specificities of friendship, and the part that friendship plays in the development of an individualized sense of self (Hallinan, forthcoming). Studies of adolescence have examined the part friendships play in the process of gaining independence and challenging parental control and in informing emergent sexuality and setting collective boundaries around sexual behavior and relationships (Crosnoe, forthcoming; Hey 2002).

Later-life friendships have attracted the interest of sociologists largely as a result of concerns over social isolation and loneliness. More recently, there has also been a focus on the potential for friends to provide support as people become more infirm or face transitions such as widowhood. While much of the research has been cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, these studies, like research into the continuing importance of family ties, have helped combat dominant stereotypes of negative aging. Research now clearly attests to the continuing involvement of older people in active friendship networks and to the importance of these networks in providing individuals with their sense of identity and in providing help in managing new circumstances (Litwak 1985). Equally though, the friendships of older people, like the friendships of younger cohorts, do not necessarily remain static. As people's circumstances change, new friendships can emerge and old ones become less active. This is particularly so with the experience of widowhood or retirement, when people often report a change in their friendship networks (Adams 1987; Field 1999; Fung, Carstensen, and Lang 2001). Equally, caring for a spouse, as well as one's own growing infirmity, may result in fewer opportunities to service and maintain existing friendships (Johnson and Troll 1994).

## NETWORKS OF FRIENDS

The development of social network analysis in the 1960s and 1970s (Mitchell 1969; Wellman, Carrington, and Hall 1988) provided an analytical framework that was previously missing in the sociology of friendship. In particular, by overcoming some of the traditional dilemmas of the notion of "community," it offered the prospect of a nonnormative and nonlocality-oriented approach to examining the range of personal relationships an individual maintained. These relationships included the different friendships people had but also incorporated other informal ties, including family ties, work ties, and neighbor ties. Thus, friendship solidarities could be examined in the context of other relational solidarities rather than in isolation. Moreover, network analysis offered the opportunity to examine how the configuration of relationships within an ego-centered network was patterned and how different patterns in turn influenced the individual relationships within the network. Thus, the network approach facilitated a better understanding of the social significance of friendship and led to different questions being asked about these ties.

As a result of employing the network perspective, sociologists began to pose questions about the personal networks—sometimes referred to as the "personal communities"—that people maintained. Many of these questions were seemingly straightforward, although they often presented greater analytical and methodological challenges than were initially recognized. They included such issues as the size of people's networks; their composition in terms of relational categories—friends, kin, colleagues, etc; the

degree of clustering of the relationships within the network; and the ways in which the networks changed over time. Developing from this, there was an emphasis on describing the configurations of the networks people sustained rather than the character of individual relationships within them. Such structural issues as size, spread, density, clustering, and the like could then be compared across different personal networks in a systematic fashion, provided sufficient data were collected about the full set of relationships in the network.

While using this type of approach to plot the membership of people's personal communities is extremely useful, it tends to direct attention toward the configurational properties of networks in ways that of themselves may not directly contribute to our understanding of friendship processes. In part, this depends on what exactly is being measured in plotting the links that constitute the network's configuration. Studies that simply use the existence or otherwise of a relationship between individuals may be less useful than those that include more multiplex measures of the quality of ties—their strength, emotional commitment, duration, exchange basis, etc. However, collecting such data is extremely time consuming and more common in research that adopts a qualitative framework. Some network studies have attempted to do this by simplifying the notion of *network structure* they draw on and being concerned principally with what Barnes (1972) terms ego-centered "stars" rather than full networks. In other words, they focus on the direct relationships an individual has rather than on the whole set of connections that exist between all the network's members (Allan 2006).

Antonucci and her colleagues have developed one such approach (e.g., Antonucci and Akiyama 1987, 1995). Antonucci's focus is on the overall patterning of commitment and social distance evident in people's personal communities. Her technique for measuring this requires respondents to place their different personal relationships on a diagram of three concentric circles—somewhat like an archery board—with those who are most close and important in the middle circle and those who are least significant on the outer circle. Methodologically, this method has proved useful in friendship research partly because of the simplicity of its visual representation but also because it encourages discursive comparison of the properties of different ties (including rearranging the consequent position of different relationships on the diagram). In turn, this approach draws on a notion of network structure distinct from that used in the network analyses discussed previously. It is not so concerned with network density or clustering as with the relative composition of the concentric circles, and in particular the membership of the circles nearest the center. By contrasting where different categories of other are placed within the concentric circles, typologies of differently constructed personal communities can be formulated. In their recent study of friendship in Britain, Pahl and Spencer (2004) distinguish five main forms of personal community—friendlike, friend-dependent,

family-dependent, familylike, and partner-dependent—that reflect the different positions of family and friends within the concentric circles. (For similar approaches drawing on Antonucci's approach, see Phillipson et al. 2000; Wenger 1990.)

One of the strengths of network analysis—of whatever form—is that it facilitates comparison, not only between the different types of friendships and other ties that people maintain but also with respect to any changes occurring in the patterning of relationship solidarities over time. This is an area of research that warrants more attention than it has received. We know that friendships change over time; in general, they are less enduring than most family ties. Yet there are relatively few longitudinal studies of friendship. Those that there are tend to have been concerned particularly with change in older people's networks (e.g., Adams 1987; Wenger and Jerrome 1999). Research into friendship change across a broader life course perspective will be extremely valuable (Pahl and Pevalin 2005). Although this issue will not be explored further here, such analyses would also contribute usefully to research and policy debates about the nature of social capital and its relationship to different health outcomes (Macinko and Starfield 2001; Muntaner and Lynch 2002; Phillipson, Allan, and Morgan 2004).

## **FRIENDSHIP, STATUS, AND IDENTITY**

As indicated previously, friendships generally occur between people who have similar types of experience and similar structural locations (Kalmijn 2002; Perkinson and Rockermann 1996; Smith 2002; Walker 1995; Ying et al. 2001). While there are exceptions, friendship is generally governed by principles of homophily (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001). In part, this is a consequence of interest and liking, but it is also a consequence of the ways in which friendship as a form of personal relationship is socially constructed. Essentially, friendship is understood as a relationship of equality and in particular as a relationship between equals (Thomas 1987). While recent research has shown that friends do not necessarily perceive each other to be equal in power and status (Adams and Torr 1998; Neff and Harter 2003), friend relationships are not usually built on ideas of hierarchy or inequality. Within the tie itself, differences in status, authority, economic power, and the like are seen as irrelevant and external. In practice though, such differences are difficult to ignore; in most cases they do impinge on the relationship. For example, if one of the friends has significantly more material resources than the other, then managing the friendship as one of equality becomes quite complex. Aside from different interests and modes of living being likely to emerge, maintaining equality in the routine exchanges of the friendship becomes more problematic, with the relationship often being experienced as less satisfying, close, and intimate (Roberto 1996; Veniegas and Peplau 1997).

Similarly, other social differences make it more difficult to develop or sustain friendships as ties between equals. Indeed, the more divergent people's social location, interests, and commitments, the less likely it is that ties of friendship will form between them. At a commonsense level, this is an obvious effect of social structure (Feld 1982). People often do not have reason to meet socially with others who are different from them (Korgen, Mahon, and Wang 2003). Moreover, friendships develop between people who feel compatible with each other, share interests, and have a common outlook (Chen et al. 2001). Sociologically, the implications of this are consequential. In particular, friendship can be seen as a manifestation of social status, a point perhaps best appreciated in the community studies tradition (e.g., Bell and Newby 1971; Knoke 1993; Laumann, Marsden, and Galaskiewicz 1977; Stacey et al. 1975). Because friendship is constructed as a tie between equals, collectively the networks of friends that people have reflect their relative standing within the hierarchy of status occurring within a society. Indeed, as status divisions have become more complex than they previously were, patterns of informal association provide a key means of capturing that complexity. In this regard, we can appropriately be judged by the company we do—and do not—keep. Moreover, changes in that company are also revealing of our changing status over time.

If friendship is significant as an indicator of status divisions, so too it is of consequence for identity construction. At one level, our identities are based on our structural location—we are nurses, mothers, adolescents, or whatever. But in addition, our sense of who we are is also developed through our interactions in the different relationships we sustain. It is in these continuing interactions that our notion of self comes to be (socially) constructed. Friendships may initially appear to be less relevant here, as typically they do not encompass settings where structural location seems to be of direct relevance. However, because friendships are ties between people who are identified—and identify—as being similar to one another, in reality they do play a significant role in identity construction. Typically, the ways in which friends “do” their friendship—the activities in which they engage, the topics of their conversations, their style of sociability, etc.—are strongly connected to their structural location. In these ways, class, gender, occupation, ethnicity, age, sexuality, partnership status, and other such factors shape the content of friendship. But equally, the enacting out of these things within friendships helps to cement identity as Jerrome (1984) illustrated so well in her classic study of the friendship behaviors of her sample of middle-aged, middle-class women.

The relationship between friendship and identity is demonstrated particularly clearly when people experience significant change in their life. Standard examples are when people are widowed or divorced or when they gain substantial promotion. At such times, the tendency is for networks of friends also to alter gradually as a consequence. These consequent changes in friendships are not



haphazard. Normally, they reflect the shifts in identity that have occurred. Thus, any new friendships generated tend to be with others who are similarly located, while those existing friendships where difference has become more marked tend to wane. Taking divorce as an example, those who experience divorce without repartnering often find that some friendships with still-married others become less active over time, while ties with those who are also separated or divorced become more central (Kalmijn and van Groenou 2005; Milardo 1987; Rands 1988). Such tendencies develop as a result of the subtle processes involved in maintaining friendship as a tie of equality. However, as a consequence of these same processes, the new identity of, in this example, being divorced is reinforced through everyday interaction with friends. Routinely discussing common experiences of divorce, resolving the various contingencies faced, making plans, engaging in activities of “singlehood” together, or whatever else, with friends in a similar position facilitates acceptance of the new identity (Litwak 1985). As with other identity shifts, changing friendship personnel reflects the changes occurring and helps establish the new identity.

## FRIENDSHIP IN LATE MODERNITY

Earlier in this chapter we referred to Silver’s (1990) arguments that the possibility of *friendship* as it is now understood arose as a consequence of the structural changes associated with the development of commercial society. As noted then, the idea that dominant modes of sociable relationships are embedded in socioeconomic structures remains a powerful one within the sociology of friendship. In this final section of the chapter we want to consider how changes associated with late modernity have influenced the organization of friendships. Particularly relevant to this are the growth of individualization, the relative decline of locality as a source of community solidarity, and the major shifts there have been in family, sexual, and domestic life, especially with regard to partner, family, and household formation and dissolution. Some have argued that these changes have resulted in a decline in sociability, especially at a local level, and the need for reestablishing forms of community participation and responsibility (Etzioni 1995, 1997). Others have heralded these changes as freeing individuals from the constraints of place and kinship, thereby enabling greater selectivity and choice to be exercised over sociability, with friendships consequently becoming more rather than less significant in people’s lives (Adams 1998; Wellman 2001; Wellman et al. 1988).

In an important article, Pescosolido and Rubin (2000) have suggested that the implications of these structural shifts in patterns of affiliation can be understood by considering their impact on personal networks. In particular, they suggest that with late modernity, a “spoke” model best represents the dominant configuration of personal networks (see also Laumann’s 1973 discussion of “radial

networks”). Like Giddens (1991, 1992), Beck (Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995), and others, they recognize that the degree of permanency apparent in individuals’ lifestyles in previous times no longer holds to the same degree now. Instead, there is increasing flexibility and transience in people’s institutional commitments, be these associated with family, employment, leisure, or even religion. As a result, the extent to which individuals are structurally embedded in longer-lasting, overlapping institutional memberships has decreased. The emergent pattern is for individuals to be involved in a range of more discrete activities, in which there is less consolidation or overlap of personnel. In turn, the configuration of personal networks tends toward Pescosolido and Rubin’s “spoke model”—a series of clusters of relationships, with only comparatively little overlap or linkage between the different clusters.

What such a network configuration fosters is a greater degree of control over lifestyle choices and the presentation of self. The knowledge others have of you and the patterns of social control they can exercise decreases in comparison with more integrated networks. This has consequences for two of the issues discussed earlier. First, this pattern of network configuration is compatible with the sorts of friendship change that occur when people’s social location and social identity alter. Not being so tied into more integrated networks more readily enables shifts and movements in the weight placed on different friendships. This, in turn, means that at times of personal change, friendships can emerge between those who now have more in common and share the new identity, without this having consequences for network integration overall. Such changes are not impossible with other network configurations, but a network with Pescosolido and Rubin’s spoke model properties is particularly compatible with the processes of friendship movements when different identities and lifestyle choices develop. And in turn, as we have argued, these friendship shifts themselves help establish the new identities and lifestyles.

Second, this form of network structure facilitates the expression of different aspects of self in different settings. There is the possibility of a degree of “compartmentalization” in the way we are with different others (Goffman 1959). Researchers have demonstrated that members of stigmatized groups, such as gay and lesbian individuals and adult fans of the Grateful Dead, are often “out” with some parts of their networks but not with others (Adams and Rosen-Grandon 2002; Weeks et al. 2001). While such cases are particularly interesting in terms of the management of different identities, they are not the only occurrence of these processes. Indeed, in less extreme forms many people present different aspects of the self to different audiences in their networks. This does not involve deliberately hiding or disguising their “true” identities; it is more a case of emphasizing different elements in different sets of relationship. The key issue here is that changes in network structures under conditions of late modernity are

likely to foster differential portrayals of the self in ways that are highly compatible with ideas about the growth of individualization and the greater freedom people have to exercise choice over the construction of their lifestyles. The consequences this has for the different friendships people maintain warrant more detailed empirical investigation among different populations than they have currently received.

## CONCLUSION

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In this chapter, we have addressed a number of key issues that have helped shape the sociology of friendship. Although historically the topic of friendship has received relatively little attention from sociologists, it is one that is clearly pertinent to debates about the ways in which patterns of social integration have altered and are altering. Indeed, there are signs that the sociology of friendship is increasingly receiving attention within social and political debates. This has long been so in terms of community decline, even if the language of friendship is often peripheral to these debates. Recently, though, the rise in popularity of the notion of social capital among policymakers and others (Putnam 2002; Putnam and Feldstein 2003) has led to a recognition that friendships influence people's health status and sense of well-being (Pahl 2000).

However, if friendship research is to realize its potential for shaping policy development and clinical interventions, then more detailed study of the different ways in which friendship has an impact on people's lives is necessary. First, there is a need for more comparative research than currently exists. In particular, it seems crucial to understand more fully the relationship between friendship patterns and social context. While researchers are now showing more interest in this (e.g., see Adams and Allan 1998; Blieszner and Adams 1992; Surra and Perlman 2003), further studies of friendships in specific cultural and historical contexts are necessary. As we have argued in the foregoing, it is evident that friendship behavior is not solely the result of individual agency but also depends on the structural circumstances under which people live out their lives. Public policies themselves constitute one component of this structural context and can consequently play

a part in encouraging or discouraging opportunities for social participation, although usually such policies are developed without much consideration for how they may affect people's social lives and relationships (Phillipson et al. 2004). It is therefore important that future studies are designed to allow comparisons of friendships across contexts (e.g., comparative international studies, historical trend analyses) so that an understanding of how contextual characteristics shape friendships can develop and contribute to policy formation.

In addition, friendship research is more likely to influence policy beneficially if there is greater collaboration between different disciplinary approaches, in particular between sociology and psychology. In general, collaboration on friendship research across disciplines has been rare. Researchers have seldom strayed outside the confines of their own disciplines; psychologists and communications scholars have mainly studied dyadic processes, and sociologists and anthropologists have focused more on aspects of network and social structure. Much of the early work in both these traditions focused on individual variations in friendship patterns, but psychologists were concerned principally with how psychological disposition shaped what happened in friendship dyads, while sociologists were concerned more with how social structural location affected friendship network structure (Adams, forthcoming). This division of intellectual turf has constrained the development of clinical intervention strategies because although there is an understanding of structure and an understanding of process, there is very little literature examining how one influences the other. Consequently, we know very little about how changing friendship network structure (e.g., introducing friends to each other to increase density, forming more diverse friendships to decrease homogeneity) might affect the dynamics of dyadic relationships (e.g., self-disclosure, satisfaction, liking) or, conversely, how changing the ways friends interact might affect the structure of their networks. Recent collaborations between researchers interested in structure and those interested in process (e.g., Adams and Blieszner 1994; Healy and Bell 1990; Neff and Harter 2003; Wright and Scanlon 1991) suggest that eventually a literature more useful in designing clinical interventions could emerge.

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF MEN AND MASCULINITY

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The impulse to develop the sociology of women, men, and gender has come primarily from feminist sociology and feminist sociologists. Those making gender visible in contemporary sociology have mainly been women, and the field has been very much inspired by addressing research questions about women and gender relations. At the same time, revealing the dynamics of gender also makes masculinity—and indeed masculinities—visible as central concepts of gendered ideology, names men as gendered, and treats the social forms and position of men as socially produced and constructed, in ways that have been rare in mainstream sociology. Accordingly, this chapter examines the development, current state, and future challenges in the sociology of men and masculinities.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF MEN AND MASCULINITIES

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In one sense, the sociology of men and masculinities is not new. Men have been studying men for a long time, and calling it “sociology,” “history,” or whatever.

Indeed, there is a profound sense in which much classical or mainstream sociology has through much of its history taken “men” and certain forms of “masculinity” as unspoken norms, fields of study, or research foci. This is clear not only in the works of the most eminent classical sociologists and social theorists, for example, Marx and Engels ([1848] 1964) and Weber ([1905] 1966), in different ways (see Kimmel 1994; Carver 2004), but also in the work of more recent key theorists, such as Foucault (1981). At the heart of classical and most current social theory, there is a characteristic silence about the gendered reflexivity of the author and constitution of that theory. Changing this involves interrogating that very silence on both the social category of men in social theory and men’s practices of theorizing (Hearn 1998).

To understand the development of the sociology of men and masculinities involves locating sociology within its own history. The combination of empirical description and secular explanation that constitute sociology took shape at the high tide of nineteenth-century European imperialism. The colonial frontier was a major source of data for European and North American social scientists writing on gender.

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AUTHORS’ NOTE: We are very grateful to collaborations with R. W. Connell in developing some of these ideas (see Connell, Hearn, and Kimmel 2005) and to Dennis L. Peck for editorial commentary.

A situational, socially constructed, and global dimension was thus present in Western social science from its earliest stage. However, an evolutionary framework was largely discarded in the early twentieth century (Connell 2002).

The first steps toward the more focused, modern analysis of masculinity are found in the pioneering psychologies of Freud ([1905] 1953b) and Adler (1956). These demonstrated that adult character was not predetermined by the body but constructed through emotional attachments to others in a turbulent growth process (Connell 1994). Anthropologists such as Mead (1935) and Malinowski (1955) went on to emphasize cultural differences in such processes, social structures, and norms. By the mid-twentieth century, these ideas had crystallized into the concept of sex role.

In the 1970s, masculinity was understood in sociology mainly as an internalized role, identity, or variable attribute of individuals, reflecting particular (in practice often meaning the United States or Western) cultural norms or values acquired by social learning from socialization agents. Under the influence of women's liberation, gay liberation, and even men's liberation, the male sex role was subject to sharp criticism—as ethnocentric, lacking in a power perspective, and positivistic (Eichler 1980; Kimmel 1987; Brittan 1989).

At the same time in the 1970s as the concept of a male sex role was being critiqued, a critical sociology of men was being inspired by feminist or feministic societal analyses of gender power relations. Hanmer (1990) lists 56 feminist publications “providing the ideas, the changed consciousness of women's lives and their relationship to men—all available by 1975” (p. 39). In what may be broadly called theories of patriarchy, men were analyzed in societal contexts, particularly in terms of differential structural and collective relations to women and other men. Different theories of patriarchy have emphasized men's social relations to women, in terms of biology, reproduction, politics, culture, family, state, sexuality, economy, and various combinations thereof. For example, O'Brien (1981) analyzed the centrality of men's relations to reproduction as more fundamental than those to production.

By the late 1970s, however, a number of feminist and profeminist critics (Rowbotham 1979) were suggesting that the concept of “patriarchy” was too monolithic, ahistorical, biologically determined, and dismissive of women's resistance and agency. In the light of this, greater attention has been given, first, to the historicizing of “patriarchy” (e.g., from private to public patriarchy); second, to the presence of multiple arenas, sites, and structures of patriarchy; and, third, to other structural gender systems, such as androcracy, fratriarchy, and viriarchy. Walby (1986, 1990) has specified the following patriarchal structures: capitalist work, the family, the state, violence, sexuality, and culture (Hearn 1987). Both the historicized and diversified approaches to patriarchy highlight the place of collective institutions, such as the state, law, religion, or business organizations, within different historical societal

forms and social arenas of patriarchy. The significance of public patriarchy lies partly in the fact that public domain organization(s) has(ve) become the prime historical unit of men's domination. Many organizations can indeed be seen as minipatriarchies in that they structure the formation and reproduction of gendered social relations; the development of corporate hierarchies, policies, processes, and practices; and the organizational construction of “persons.” These have consequent implications for the social and historical formation of men in each case (Hearn 1992).

## THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF MEN AND MASCULINITIES

### Men and Masculinities as Historically and Socially Constructed

Where men's outlooks and culturally defined characteristics were formerly generally the unexamined norm for religion, science, citizenship, law, and authority, the specificity of different masculinities is now recognized, and increasingly, their genealogies, structures, and dynamics are investigated. The twin debates and critiques around male sex role and patriarchy, noted above, in many ways laid the foundations or the conceptual and political terrain for a more differentiated, albeit power-laden approach to men and masculinities. Building on both social psychological and social structural accounts, social constructionist perspectives highlighting complexities of men's social power have emerged (Carrigan, Connell, and Lee 1985; Kaufman 1987). These emphasize both critiques of gender relations, along with critiques of the dominance of heterosexuality, heterosexism, and homophobia (Herek 1986; Frank 1987). Thus, two major sets of power relations have been addressed: the power of men over women (heterosocial power relations), and the power of some men over other men (homosocial power relations). These twin themes inform contemporary inquiries on the construction of masculinities.

The social construction of men and masculinities has been explored with many different scopes of analysis and sets of interrelations, including the social organization of masculinities in their global and regional iterations; institutional reproduction and articulation of masculinities; the organization and practices of masculinities within a context of gender relations, that is, how interactions with women, children, and other men express, challenge, and reproduce gender inequalities; and individual men's performance, understanding, and expression of their gendered identities. Masculinities do not exist in social and cultural vacuums but are constructed within specific institutional settings, such as families, workplaces, schools, factories, and the media (Kimmel, Hearn, and Connell 2005). There is growing interest in the construction of masculinities within discourses and in relation to media, representations,

and culture (Petersen 1998). Gender is as much a structure of relationships within and between institutions as a property of individual identity.

In particular, sociological research on men has been strongly informed by growing acknowledgment of historical context and relativity, with studies of situational masculinities and the institutions in which they are located. These have included dominant (Davidoff and Hall 1990; Tosh and Roper 1991; Hall 1992; Hearn 1992; Kimmel 1997; Tosh 1999) and resistant (Strauss 1982; Kimmel and Mosmiller 1992) masculinities at home, at work, and in political and cultural activities. Key historical work has come from gay history (Weeks 1990; Mort 2000), and histories of colonies of settlement, on the military (Phillips 1987) and on schools (Morrell 2001b).

### Conceptualizations of Masculinities

Conceptual work has been an important part of sociological research on men. This has emphasized questions of both social structure and agency, and production and reproduction, as the contexts for the formation of particular masculinities (Hearn 1987; Holter 1997). Above all, recent studies have highlighted questions of power—in interpersonal relations, work, home, and social structures. In these, the concept of masculinities, as opposed to the male sex role, has been and remains very important in sociological work, even though commentators have used the term differently (Carrigan et al. 1985; Brod 1987; Brod and Kaufman 1994).

Increasingly, different masculinities are interrogated in the plural, not the singular, as hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, marginalized, and resistant. Within this framework, masculinity can be understood as comprising signs, performances, and practices, both personal and institutional, that often, even characteristically, obscure contradictions. Key features of these theorizations include the centrality of power relations in masculinities; men's unequal relations to men as well as men's relations to women; copresence of institutional, interpersonal, and intrapsychic dynamics; and historical transformation and change.

The first substantial discussion of the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" was in the paper "Men's Bodies," written by R. W. Connell in 1979 and published in *Which Way Is Up?* in 1983. The background to this paper was debates on patriarchy, and the Gramscian hegemony in question was hegemony in the patriarchal system of gender relations. The paper considers the social construction of the body in both boys' and adult men's practices. In discussing "the physical sense of maleness," Connell emphasizes the practices and experiences of taking and occupying space and holding the body tense, as well as size, skill, power, force, strength, and physical development—within sport, work, sexuality, and fatherhood. He argues that "the embedding of masculinity in the body is very much a social process, full of tensions and contradiction; . . . even physical masculinity is historical, rather than a biological fact" (p. 30).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was further developed in the early 1980s, in the light of gay activism and research. This formulation articulated analyses of oppression produced from both feminism and gay liberation. It is not men in general who are oppressed within patriarchal sexual relations, but particular groups of men, such as homosexual men, whose situations are related to the "logic" of women's subordination to men (Carrigan et al. 1985:586).

In the book *Masculinities* by Connell (1995), the notion of hegemonic masculinity was defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p. 77). Hegemonic masculinity embodies a "currently accepted answer" or strategy; it is likely to include assumptions and practices of domination, patriarchal privilege, and higher valuation of men's actions and knowledge. Although rather stable, hegemonic masculinity is contested and subject to struggle and change. There are complex interplays of hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, and marginalized masculinities, for example, when some gay men accept aspects of hegemonic masculinity but are still marginalized or subordinated.

While in identifying forms of domination by men, of both women and other men, the concepts of masculinities and hegemonic masculinity have been particularly successful; this has not been without problems, and these will be addressed in the concluding section.

### Intersectionalities

Although men and masculinities are now an explicit focus of sociological research and are recognized as explicitly gendered, men and masculinities are not formed by gender alone. Men are not simply or only men. Gendering in the construction of men and masculinities intersects with other social divisions and differences. Men and masculinities are shaped by differences of, for example, age, class, disability, ethnicity, and racialization. Men's gender status intersects with racial, ethnic, class, occupational, national, global, and other social statuses, divisions, and differences. The intersection of social divisions has been a very important area of theorizing in critical race studies, black studies, postcolonial studies, and kindred fields (hooks 1984; Ouzgane and Coleman 1998; Morrell and Swart 2005). Paradoxically, as studies of men and masculinities deconstruct the gendering of men and masculinities, other social divisions may come more to the fore. Part of the long-term trajectory of gendered studies of men could be the deconstruction of gender (Lorber 1994, 2000).

Very promising research is being carried out on differences and intersectionalities among men by age, class, "race," sexuality, and the like and the intersections of these axes of identity and social organization. Discussion of the

relations of gender and class can demonstrate the ways in which different classes exhibit different forms of masculinities and the ways in which these both challenge and reproduce gender relations among men and between women and men. A key issue is how men relate to other men and how some men dominate other men. Men and masculinities are placed in both cooperative and conflictual relations with each other—in organizational, occupational, and class relations—and in terms defined more explicitly in relation to gender, such as family, kinship, sexuality, and gender politics.

Some intersectional research on masculinities has used ethnography to take analysis inside gender construction and examine how meanings are made and articulated among men themselves. For example, Matt Gutmann (1996) has investigated the construction of masculinity among poor men in Mexico City, and Loic Wacquant (2004) has conducted participant observation among poor black young men training to become Golden Gloves boxers in Chicago.

Intersectional perspectives also link with research on the impacts of globalization or glocalization on local gender patterns of men's employment, definitions of masculinity, and men's sexuality (Altman 2001). For example, dominant versions of masculinities are rearticulated globally as part of the economic and cultural globalization project by which dominant states subordinate or engulf weaker states (Connell 1998, 2005). While most empirical research is still produced within the developed countries, global perspectives are increasing significantly, showing the frequent ethnocentrism of Western assumptions about men, both sociologically and societally (Cleaver 2002; Pease and Pringle 2002).

## Methodologies and Epistemologies

Many research methods have been used in developing sociological studies of men and masculinities, including social surveys; statistical analyses; ethnographies; interviews; and qualitative, discursive, and deconstructive approaches, as well as various mixed methods. An explicitly gendered focus on men and masculinities can mean rethinking particular research methods. Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2002) have set out some key issues to be borne in mind when interviewing men; Pease (2000) has applied memory work in researching men; and Jackson (1990) has developed men's critical life history work. Sociological methodologies can be retheorized and repracticed, with a more explicit recognition of their gendering (Hearn 1998).

Detailed cultural studies, ethnographic and discursive research have provided close-grained descriptions of multiple, internally complex, even contradictory masculinities in specific locales (Messner 1992; Mac an Ghaill 1994; Segal 1997; Petersen 1998). Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley (1999) have identified specific "imaginary positions and psychodiscursive practices" in the negotiating of masculinities, including hegemonic masculinity and their

identification with the masculine. These are heroic positions, "ordinary" positions, and rebellious positions. The first "could be read as an attempt to actually *instantiate* hegemonic masculinity since, here, men align themselves strongly with conventional ideals" (p. 340). The second attempts a distancing from certain conventional or ideal notions of the masculine; instead the "ordinariness of the self; the self as normal, moderate or average" (p. 343) is emphasized. The third position is characterized in terms of their unconventionality, with the imaginary position involving the flouting of social expectations (p. 347). With all these self-positionings, especially the last two, ambiguity and subtlety, even contradiction, in the self-construction of masculinity, hegemonic or not, is present.

Moreover, studying men in a gender-explicit way raises several recurring epistemological considerations. These include the form of and assumptions about epistemology; the impact of who is researching, with what prior knowledge and positionality; the relevance of the specific topic being studied; and the relation between those studying men and the men studied. These are all general issues, well discussed in debates on feminist and critical epistemology. The importance of epistemological pluralism in studying men is clear in feminist and mixed-gender debates on men (Friedman and Sarah 1982; Jardine and Smith 1987; Hearn and Morgan 1990; Schacht and Ewing 1998; Adams and Savran 2002; Gardiner 2002).

The gendering of epistemology, along with the gendered analysis of academic organizations, has tremendous implications for rethinking the position and historical dominance of men in academia and how that structures what counts as knowledge (Connell 1997; Hearn 2001). In addition, there is the question—in what specific social contexts, especially academic contexts, do the above activities take place? (Hearn 2003). There are various different approaches to epistemology, both generally and in studying men—rationalist, empiricist, critical, standpoint, post-modernist, and so on (Harding 1991). Standpoint traditions—the view that knowledge is shaped by social position—inform much of the development of feminist and profeminist critical studies on men. Thus, the positioning of the author in relation to the topic of men, as a personal, epistemological, and indeed geopolitical relation, shapes the object of research and the topic of men and masculinities in a variety of ways (Hearn 1998). Differentiations in the positioning of the researcher in relation to the topic of men are partly a matter of individual political choices and decisions, but increasingly the importance of the more structural, geopolitical positioning is being recognized. Postcolonial theory has shown that it matters whether analysis is being conducted from within the West, the global South, the former Soviet territories, the Middle East, or elsewhere. History, geography, and global politics matter in epistemologies in studying men.

What may appear obvious and open to straightforward empirical data gathering is not so simple. One might argue that different knowledge is available to men than women,

or to feminists, profeminists, or antifeminists. Such differences arise from socially defined experiences and standpoints. We find the collective variant of standpoint theory more compelling than the individual viewpoint. A collective understanding of standpoint theory can usefully inform research designs in highlighting gendered power relations in the subjects and objects of research and in the research process itself. It can also assist the production of more explicitly gendered and grounded knowledge about men, masculinities, and gender relations. Emphasizing the researcher's social position is not to suggest a deterministic account of the impact of the researcher on the research process; rather, the researcher's social position is *relevant* but not all-encompassing. Positionality is especially important in researching certain topics and sites, but the relevance and impact of the researcher's social position is likely to vary with different kinds of research sites, materials, and questions.

### Political and Policy Issues

The growth of sociological and related research on men and masculinities reflects a growing and diverse public and policy interest, ranging from boys' difficulties in school to men's violence. Research is paralleled by the development of admittedly extremely uneven policy debates at local, national, regional, and global levels. The motivations for such policy initiatives can also come from varied political positions, ranging from men's rights to profeminism to the emphasis on differences between men, whether by social class, age, sexuality, and racialization (Messner 1997).

In the rich countries, including Japan, Germany, and the United States, and in some less wealthy countries, including Mexico and Brazil, the late 1980s and 1990s saw rising media interest and public debate about boys and men. For example, in Australia, the strongest focus has been on problems of boys' education (Lingard and Douglas 1999). In the United States, more attention has been given to interpersonal relationships and ethnic differences (Kimmel and Messner 2004). In Japan, there has been a challenge to the "salaryman" model of middle-class masculinity (Taga 2005). In the Nordic region, there has been more focus on gender equity policies and men's responses to women's changing position. In Latin America, especially Mexico, debates have addressed the broad cultural definition of masculinity in a long-standing discussion of "machismo," its roots in colonialism, and effects on economic development (Gutmann and Viveros Vigoya 2005).

In most of the developing world, these debates have not emerged, or have emerged only intermittently. In the context of mass poverty, the problems of economic and social development have had priority. However, questions about men and masculinities gained increasing priority in development studies in the 1990s, as feminist concerns about women in development led to discussions of gender and development and the specific economic and political interests of men (White 2000).

These debates have different emphases in different regions. In Latin America, particular concerns arose about the effects of economic restructuring. Men's sexual behavior and role in reproduction are addressed in the context of population control policies and sexual health issues, including HIV/AIDS prevention (Viveros Vigoya 1997; Valdés and Olavarria 1998). In Africa, regional history has given debates on men and masculinities a distinctive focus on race relations and on violence, both domestic and communal, as well as growing research on HIV/AIDS (Morrell 2001a; Ouzgane and Morrell 2005). In the Eastern Mediterranean and Southwest Asia, cultural analysis of masculinity has particularly concerned modernization and Islam, the legacy of colonialism, and the region's relationship with contemporary Western economic and military power (Ghoussoub and Sinclair-Webb 2000).

Locally and regionally, there are attempts to highlight problems both created by and experienced by men and boys and initiate interventions, such as boys' work, youth work, antiviolence programs, and men's health programs. There is growing interest in the interventions against men's violence at both global (Ferguson et al. 2004) and local (Edwards and Hearn 2005) levels.

By the late 1990s, the question of men and masculinity was also emerging in international forums, such as diplomacy and international relations (Zalewski and Parpart 1998), the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations (Breines, Connell, and Heide 2000), and international business (Hooper 2000). The United Nations and its agencies have also been at the forefront in the field of men's health and HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention. An interesting convergence of women's and men's issues has taken place at the United Nations. Following the world conferences on women that began in 1975, there has been increasing global debate on the implications of gender issues for men. The Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women said,

The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. . . . The Platform for Action emphasises that women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world. (United Nations 2001:17)

Since 1995, these issues are increasingly being taken up in the United Nations and its various agencies and in other transgovernmental organizations' policy discussions. For example, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women in 2003 organized a worldwide online discussion forum and expert group meeting in Brasilia on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality as part of its preparation for the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, with the following comments.

Over the last decade, there has been a growing interest in the role of men in promoting gender equality, in particular as the achievement of gender equality is now clearly seen as a societal responsibility that concerns and should fully engage men as well as women (Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations 2003a:1). A number of very informative documents on the challenges facing men in different parts of the world that were part of this preparation are available online (Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations 2003b). These should be read along with the subsequent Report to the Secretary General on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality (Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations 2003c).

Several national governments, most prominently in the Nordic region but also elsewhere, have promoted men's and boys' greater involvement in gender equality agendas. Regional initiatives include those in the European Union and the Council of Europe. The multinational study by the collaborative European Union's "The Social Problem of Men" research project (Critical Research on Men in Europe) is an attempt to generate a comparative framework for understanding masculinities in Europe. The goal is to remain sensitive to cultural differences among the many countries of that continent and to the ways in which nations of the European Union are, to some extent, developing convergent definitions of gender. Here, we see both the similarities across different nations and variations among them as well, because different countries articulate different masculinities (Hearn et al. 2004; Hearn and Pringle 2006; Pringle et al. 2006).

In this European research, four main analytical and policy themes around men have been explored: home and work, social exclusion, violence, and health. In the first of these, recurrent issues across societies include men's occupational, working, and wage advantages over women; gender segregation at work; and many men's close identity associations with paid work. There remains a general lack of research on men as managers, policymakers, owners, and other power holders. In many countries, there are twin problems of the unemployment of some or many men in certain social categories, and yet work overload and long working hours for other men. These can especially be a problem for young men and young fathers; and they can affect both working- and middle-class men as, for example, during economic recession. Work organizations are becoming more time-hungry and less secure and predictable. While it is necessary not to overstate the uniformity of this trend, which is relevant to certain groups only and not all countries, time utilization is as a fundamental issue of creating difference in everyday negotiations between men and women.

At the same time that men generally benefit from dominant power relations at home and work, some men are subject to various forms of social exclusion. The social exclusion of certain men often connects with unemployment of certain categories of men (such as less educated,

rural, ethnic minority, young, and older), men's isolation within and separation from families, and associated social and health problems.

Men's violence to women, children, and men remain at a high level and a major social problem. Men are overrepresented among those using violence, especially heavy violence. This violence is also age related. Violence against women by known men is becoming recognized as a major social problem in most of the countries. The range of abusive behaviors perpetrated includes direct physical violence, isolation and control of movements, and control of money. There has been considerable research on prison and clinical populations of violent men. There is now also research on accounts and understandings of violence to women from men living in the community, men's engagement with criminal justice and welfare agencies, and the evaluation of men's programs intervening with such men.

In terms of the health theme, there are repeated patterns of men's relatively lower life expectancy, poorer health, higher number of accidents and suicide, and higher morbidity compared with women. Some studies see dominant forms of masculinity as hazardous to health. Men tend to suffer and die more and at a younger age than women from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases, accidents, and violence. Socioeconomic factors, qualifications, social status, life style, diet, smoking and drinking, and hereditary factors can be important for morbidity and mortality. Gender differences in health arise from how certain work done by men is in hazardous occupations. These themes raise urgent questions for sociology and policy.

## **THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF MEN AND MASCULINITIES**

While it is not possible to predict the future of the sociology of men and masculinities with any precision, it may be possible to identify some emerging problems and approaches that are likely to be fruitful. There is, first, the task of developing the field on a global and transnational scale. The sociological record here is very uneven; research on men and masculinities is still mainly a First World enterprise. There is far more research in the United States than in any other country. There are major regions of the world where research even partly relevant to these questions is scarce—including China, the Indian subcontinent, and Central and West Africa. To respond to this lack is not a matter of sending out First World researchers working with existing paradigms. That has happened all too often in the past, reproducing, in the realm of knowledge, the very relations of dominance and subordination that are part of the problem. Forms of cooperative research that use international resources to generate new knowledge of local relevance need to be developed.

At the same time, the possibilities in postcolonial theory are still relatively little explored (Ouzgane and



Coleman 1998; Morrell and Swart 2005). They are very relevant in transforming a research field historically centered in the First World. Analyses of political and economic transformations, neoimperialism, militarism, and state and nonstate terrorism are seriously underdeveloped (Higate 2003; Novikova and Kambourov 2003), as is political and economic analysis more generally. Most discussions of men and gender acknowledge the centrality of labor and power, but do not carry them forward into analysis of gendered economy and politics.

Next, there are several issues that seem to be growing in significance. The most obviously important is the relation of masculinities to those emerging dominant powers in the global political economy. Research in the sociology of organizations has already developed methods for studying men and masculinities in corporations and other organizations (Kanter 1977; Cockburn 1983, 1991; Collinson and Hearn 1996, 2005; Ogasawara 1998). This approach could be applied more fully to transnational operations, including the transnational capitalist corporations and military organizations, although it will call for creative international cooperation.

There are other problems of which the significance has been known for some time but that have remained under-researched. A notable example is the individual and interpersonal development of masculinities in the course of growing up. How children are socialized into gender was a major theme of sex role discussions, and when that literature went into a decline, this problem seems to have stagnated. Recent debates on boys' education have also produced little new developmental theorizing. However, a variety of approaches to development and social learning exist (ethnographic, psychoanalytic, cognitive), along with excellent fieldwork models (Thorne 1993).

This brings us to a number of conceptual and theoretical questions. There has been a widespread application of the concepts of masculinities, and especially hegemonic masculinity. These have been used in various different and sometimes confusing ways; this can be a conceptual and empirical weakness (Clatterbaugh 1998). While Connell (1995) has described hegemonic masculinity as a "configuration of gender practice" (p. 77) rather than a type of masculinity, the use of the term has sometimes been as if it is a type. There is growing critical debate around the very

concepts of masculinities and hegemonic masculinity from a variety of methodological positions, including the historical (MacInnes 1998), materialist (Donaldson 1993; McMahon 1993; Hearn 1996, 2004), and poststructuralist (Whitehead 1999, 2002).

Several unresolved problems remain. First, are we talking about cultural representations, everyday practices or institutional structures? Second, how exactly do the various dominant and dominating ways that men are—tough/aggressive/violent; respectable/corporate; controlling of resources; controlling of images; and so on—connect with each other? Third, the concept of hegemonic masculinity may carry contradictions and, arguably, has failed to demonstrate the autonomy of the gender system, from class and other social systems (Donaldson 1993). Fourth, why is it necessary to hang onto the concept of masculinity, when concepts of, say, men's practices (Hearn 1996), manhood (Kimmel 1997), or manliness (or unmanliness) (Mangan and Walvin 1987; Liliequist 1999; Ekenstam, Johansson, and Kuosmanen 2001) may be more applicable in some contexts, and the first concept has been subject to such critique.

Indeed, the range of critiques points to more fundamental sociological problematics. There is a strong case for a turn to the critique and deconstruction of the social, societal, and sociological taken-for-grantedness of the category of "men," and its own hegemony. Such a critique of the hegemony of men may bring together feminist materialist theory and cultural queer theory, along with modernist theories of hegemony and poststructuralist discourse theory (Hearn 2004). There are relatively underdeveloped theoretical perspectives that may give greater insight even into well-researched issues. These could include the combining the insights of poststructuralism with materially grounded analyses of men and masculinities, whether as controllers of power and resources or as excluded and marginalized.

Finally, much remains to be done in developing interdisciplinary scholarship on men. An interdisciplinary research agenda on all these empirical, theoretical, and policy issues would move the study of men forward. Understanding is worthwhile if it can assist the creation of a more gender-just world. Uses of knowledge and relations between research and practice remain key in developing this field.

## PART III

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# THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE LIFE COURSE

# THE SOCIOLOGY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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**T**he study of children and youth—or childhood studies—involves researchers from diverse disciplines who theorize and conduct research on children and adolescents. Woodhead (2004) aptly explains,

Interest in *Childhood Studies* is for many born out of frustration with the narrow versions of *the child* offered by traditional academic discourses and methods of inquiry, especially a rejection of the ways psychology, sociology, and anthropology traditionally partition and objectify *the child* as subject to processes of development, socialization or acculturation. (P. x)

Since the late 1980s, sociologists have made sizable contributions to the study of children and youth, and the field of childhood studies has become recognized as a legitimate field of academic enquiry. Increasingly, childhood is used as a social position or a conceptual category to study. Like women's studies, the study of children has emerged as an interdisciplinary field. Researchers of children from established disciplines, such as anthropology, education, history, psychology, and sociology, have found a meeting place in this emergent interdisciplinary field of childhood studies.

In the following sections, I will first outline the relative contributions of different approaches to the field of childhood studies. Some approaches find a home within one discipline, while other approaches are used by more than one discipline. Specifically, I will examine approaches outside sociology, such as historical, developmental psychological, and children's literature, and then I will discuss four perspectives used by sociologists, namely the cultural approach, the social structural approach, the demographic approach, and the general socialization approach. While

sociologists use these four perspectives, childhood scholars trained in other disciplines also use these perspectives. I will then consider the usefulness of childhood studies as an interdisciplinary area of study and present a vision for the future of childhood studies within sociology.

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO CHILDHOOD STUDIES

### Historical Approaches to Childhood Studies

Historical research informs what the concept of childhood means. Ariès ([1960] 1962) made the first argument that childhood is socially and historically constructed. He did not view it as a *natural* state defined by biology. By examining works of art dating back 1,000 years, he noted a difference in the rendering of children prior to the 1700s, wherein children were depicted as little adults and not as a distinctive group. In agreement with Ariès, Demos (1970) put forth a similar argument using evidence gathered on the Puritans of the Plymouth Colony in the 1600s, noting that children were not considered a special group with shared needs or status. These researchers asserted that the shift from treating children as small adults to children as valuable individuals to be protected goes hand-in-hand with other societal shifts such as the spread of schooling and the decline of child mortality.

While Ariès's hypothesis has been challenged and criticized by historical research and empirical evidence (see Gittins 2004; Nelson 1994), his ideas have inspired social scientists to study ordinary children, and many studies have been produced as a result. As a dialogue with the

work of Ariès, De Mause ([1976] 1995:4) developed a *psychogenic theory of history*, which asserted that parent-child relations have evolved to create greater intimacy and higher emotional satisfaction over time. De Mause explained that parent-child relations evolve in a linear fashion and that parent-child relationships change incrementally and, in turn, fuel further historical change. In response to this, Pollock (1983) dismisses the findings of researchers such as Ariès, Demos, and De Mause, who assert the modern or incremental approach to childhood, arguing that “parents have always valued their children: we should not seize too eagerly upon theories of fundamental change in parental attitudes over time” (p. 17). While Pollock specifically counters the conclusions of Demos on children living in the 1700s in the Plymouth colony, his conclusions respond to all prior research positing that childhood is a modern concept.

Historical research documents that the idea of childhood emanates from the middle class as members of the middle class first advanced laws to limit child labor and promoted education and protection of children (Kehily 2004). The shift of children from economic to emotional contributors of the family after the seventeenth century took place first among middle-class boys and later became the expectation for all children, regardless of social class or gender (Zelizer 1985). A good example of this middle-class perspective is illustrated in the writing of Mayhew, a social commentator from the nineteenth century (1861, in Kehily 2004), who writes about a disadvantaged eight-year-old street vendor from the working class who has “lost all childish ways” in the *Watercress Girl* in *London Labour and the London Poor*.

While Mayhew calls attention to the plight of working-class children in the mid-nineteenth century, other research (Steedman 1990; Gittins 1988) indicates that it is not until the early twentieth century that the *childhood* concept is redefined for working-class children in the United Kingdom. Child poverty and ill health were viewed as social problems and resulted in a shift away from economic to increased emotional value of children and altered expectations that children should be protected and educated (Cunningham 1991).

The idea of *lost or stolen childhood* continues to be prominent in popular discussions of childhood (Kehily 2004:3). With this, historical approaches offer a great deal to the field of childhood studies because they allow us to view the concept of *childhood* as malleable. The childhood concept does not have the same meaning today as it did 300 years ago in a given culture, and it does not have the same meaning from culture to culture or even across social classes during a historical moment. Most historical research focuses on Western forms of childhood, yet these constructs may be useful for understanding certain aspects of childhood in non-Western contexts, especially when similar socioeconomic factors, such as industrialization, and a shift from an agrarian to a cash economy, may frame conditions.

Ideas about how childhood is bound by culture, political economy, and epoch continue to be played out today in many non-Western contexts. For example, Hollos (2002) found that a new partnership family type emerged alongside the lineage-based system as a small Tanzanian community underwent a shift from subsistence agriculture with hoe cultivation to wage labor. These family types exhibited two distinct parental perspectives on what childhood should be and how children should spend their time. Partnership families emerging with a cash economy tend to view their children as a means of enjoyment and pleasure, whereas lineage-based families typically see their children as necessary for labor needs in the near term and as investments and old-age insurance in the long term.

In this way, historical perspectives have the potential to inform contemporary cultural and social constructive theories on children and childhood studies. The next step is to move beyond Ariès and the dialogue he created to address the persistence of current social issues that involve children such as child poverty, child labor, and disparities across childhoods worldwide (see Cunningham 1991).

### Developmental Psychological Approaches to Childhood Studies

Sully’s *Studies of Childhood* (Sully [1895] 2000, quoted in Woodhead 2003) notes, “We now speak of the beginning of a careful and methodological investigation of child nature.” By the early twentieth century, developmental psychology became the dominant paradigm for studying children (Woodhead 2003). Developmental psychology has studied and marked the stages and transitions of Western childhood. Piaget’s (1926) model of developmental stages stands as the foundation. Within the developmental psychology framework, children are adults in training and their age is linked to physical and cognitive developments. Children travel a developmental path taking them in due time to a state of being adult members of the society in which they live (Kehily 2004). Children are therefore viewed as learners with potential at a certain position or stage in a journey to child to an adult status (Verhellen 1997; Walkerdine 2004).

Social and cultural researchers have critiqued the developmental psychological approach, largely faulting its treatment of children as *potential subjects* who can only be understood along the child-to-adult continuum (Buckingham 2000; Castenada 2002; James and Prout [1990] 1997; Jenks 2004; Lee 2001; Stainton Rogers et al. 1991). Qvortrup (1994) notes that developmental psychology frames children as *human becomings* rather than *human beings*. Adding to this, Walkerdine (2004) suggests that while psychology is useful in understanding children, this usefulness may be bound to Western democratic societies at a specific historical moment.

Still, Lee (2001) cautions that we should not give developmental psychology a wholesale toss, noting, “What could *growing up* mean once we have distanced ourselves

from the dominant frameworks' account of socialization and development?" (p. 54). Likewise, Kehily (2004) notes that considering differences between sociology and developmental psychology is useful, yet it is also useful to consider what is shared or complementary across the two.

Developmental psychologists have not reached consensus on the relative importance of physical, psychological, social, and cultural factors in shaping children's development (Boocock and Scott 2005). Gittins (1988:22) urges social scientists studying children to bear in mind the *nature versus nurture* debate. Bruner (2000) explains that both biological and social factors are important because babies are born with start-up knowledge, which they then add and amend with life experiences. Concurring with this approach, Chomsky (1996) explains that a child's biological makeup is "awakened by experience" and "sharpened and enriched" through interactions with other humans and objects.

Walkerdine (2004) considers developmental psychology as limited because of its deterministic trajectory and sociology as limited because of its omission of psychological factors alongside sociological or cultural factors. Walkerdine (2004) points to several developmental psychological approaches to consider the social production of children as subjects, namely situated learning (Cole and Scribner 1990; Haraway 1991), acquiring knowledge through practice or apprenticeship (Lave and Wenger 1991), actor network theory (Law and Moser 2002), and the idea of assemblages as children learn to fill a child role in society (Deleuze and Guattari 1988). These approaches allow the researcher to include children's internal and external learning practices and processes.

As such, developmental psychology can continue to contribute to childhood studies. In the 1990s, sociologists helped cull and identify useful concepts and tools for childhood studies by criticizing developmental psychology. As the field of childhood studies continues to grow into a defined and recognized discipline, useful tools and concepts from developmental psychology should be included. Likewise, Woodhead (2003) asserts that several concepts and tools from developmental psychology—notably *scaffolding*, *zone of proximal development*, *guided participation*, *cultural tools*, *communities of practice*—are also relevant for childhood studies (see Lave and Wenger 1991; Mercer 1995; Rogoff 1990; Wood 1988). Psychologists' concern with the individual child can complement sociological research that considers children as they interact within their environment.

### Children's Literature as an Approach to Childhood Studies

Childhood as a separate stage of life is portrayed in children's books, and the medium of books represents a substantial part of the material culture of childhood. Books may be viewed as a window onto children's lives and a useful tool for comprehending how and why children's

worlds are created. Hunt (2004) notes that children's literature may be unreliable for understanding childhood because children's books typically reflect the aspirations of adults for children of a particular epoch. Hunt (2004) holds however that children's literature remains a meeting place for adults and children where different visions of childhood can be entertained and negotiated. In agreement with historical research on the concept of childhood, children's books were first produced for middle-class children and had moralizing purposes. Later, children's books were produced for all children, filled with middle-class values to be spread to all.

There is agreement and disagreement on the definition of childhood when examining the children's literature of different time periods and different cultures. For example, several books of the 1950s and 1960s—including *The Borrowers*, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, and *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*—depicted adults looking back while children are looking forward (Hunt 2004). Likewise, Spufford (2002:18) notes that the 1960s and 1970s produced a *second golden age* of children's literature that presented a coherent, agreed-on idea of childhood. Furthermore, an examination of children's literature indicates different childhoods were being offered to children in the United States and Britain during the nineteenth century. British children were depicted as being restrained, while American children were described as independent and having boundless opportunity (Hunt 2004). In this way, culture and children's material world coalesce to offer very different outlooks on life to children.

The goal of books may change, from moralizing to idealistic, yet across epochs and cultures they teach children acceptable roles, rules, and expectations. Children's literature is a powerful platform of interaction wherein children and adults can come together to discuss and negotiate childhood.

### Cultural and Social Construction Approaches to Childhood Studies

Anthropological cultural studies have laid important groundwork for research on children, and sociologists have extended these initial boundaries to develop a social construction of childhood. Anthropological research (Opie and Opie 1969) first noted that children should be recognized as an autonomous community free of adult concerns and filled with its own stories, rules, rituals, and social norms. Sociologists then have used the social construction approach, which draws on social interaction theory, to include children's agency and daily activities to interpret children's lives (see James and Prout [1990] 1997; Jenks 2004; Maybin and Woodhead 2003; Qvortrup 1993; Stainton Rogers et al. 1991; Woodhead 1999). Childhood is viewed as a *social phenomenon* (Qvortrup 1994). With this perspective, meaning is interpreted through the experiences of children and the networks within which

they are embedded (Corsaro 1988). Researchers generally use ethnographic methods to attain reflexivity and include children's voices. In this section, I will first discuss the social constructivist approach of childhood research in two areas, children's lives within institutional settings such as day care centers and schools, and children's worlds as they are constructed through material culture.

Evidence suggests that young children actively add meaning and create peer cultures within institutional settings. For example, observations of toddler peer groups show preferences for sex emerge by two years of age and race can be distinguished by three years of age (Thompson, Grace, and Cohen 2001; Van Ausdale and Feagin 2001). Research also indicates that play builds on itself and across playgroups or peer groups. Even when the composition of children's groups changes, children develop rules and rituals that regulate the continuation of the play activity as well as who may join an existing group. Knowledge is sustained within the peer group even when there is fluctuation.

School-based studies (see Adler and Adler 1988; Corsaro 1988; Hardman 1973; LaReau 2002; Thorne 1993; Van Ausdale and Feagin) have added a great deal to our understandings of childhood. Stephens (1995) examined pictures drawn by Sami School children of Norway to learn how the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster and its nuclear fallout affected their lives. The children expressed themselves through their drawings to show how the depleted environment affected their health, diet, work, daily routines, and cultural identity. Van Ausdale and Feagin (2001) explain how racism is created among preschool children's play patterns and speak. They find that children experiment and learn from one another how to identify with their race and learn the privileges and behaviors of their race in comparison with other races.

Using participant observation of children in a primary school setting, Hardman (1973) advanced the idea that children should be studied in their own right and treated as having agency. She found that children represent one level of a society's beliefs, values, and social interactions. The children's level interacts as *-muted voices* with other levels of society's beliefs, values, and social interactions, shaping them and being shaped by them (Hardman 1973). Corsaro (1988) used participant observations of children at play in a nursery school setting to augment Hardman's idea of a children's level. He observed and described children as active makers of meaning through social interaction. Likewise, Corsaro and Eder (1990) conceptualize children as observing the adult world but using elements of it to create a unique child culture.

A few studies (see *Peer Power* by Adler and Adler 1988 and *Gender Play* by Thorne 1993) show how the cultural world of children creates a stratification structure similar to that of the adult world in a way that makes sense for children. Thorne's (1993) study of children's culture is set in an elementary school setting, wherein children have little say in making the rules and structure. Still, she finds

children create meaning through playground games that use *pollution rituals* to reconstruct larger social patterns of inequality as they occur through gender, social class, and race (Thorne 1993:75). Similarly, other studies show how behaviors within peer cultures—such as racism, masculinity, or sexism (see Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman 2002; Hey 1997; James, Jenks, and Prout 1998) and physical and emotional abuse (Ambert 1995)—are taught and negotiated within children's peer groups.

In addition, childhood can be interpreted through the material makeup of children's worlds, generally taking the form of toys (see Lamb 2001; Reynolds 1989; Zelizer 2002). Zelizer (2002) argues that children are producers, consumers, and distributors. Lamb (2001) explains that children use Barbie dolls to share and communicate sexual knowledge within a peer group producing a secretive child culture.

Cook (2004) contends that the concept of *child* has been constructed through the market. Through a social history of the children's clothing industry, Cook explains how childhood became associated with commodities. He contends that childhood began to be *commodified* with the publication of the first children's clothing trade journal in 1917. By the early 1960s, the child had become a legitimate consumer with its own needs and motivations. The consuming child has over time been provided a separate children's clothing department stratified by age and gender.

As in Cook's thesis, others (e.g., Buckingham 2004; Jing 2000; Postman 1982) provide evidence to add support to the idea that children's consumption defines childhood. Jing (2000) explains how the marketing of snack foods and fast foods to children has dramatically affected childhood in China. Likewise, television (Postman 1982) and computers (Buckingham 2004) reshape what we think of as childhood. Children are argued to have a reversed power relationship with adults in terms of computers because children are more comfortable with this technology (Tapscott 1998). In addition, access to the Internet has created a new space for peer culture that is quite separate from adults. Through chat rooms and e-mail, children can communicate and share information among peers without face-to-face interaction. As a result, the stage on which children's culture is created is altered.

### Social Structural Approaches to Childhood Studies

Social structural approaches to childhood studies can be divided into two areas, those that distinguish children's experience by age status and those that distinguish children's experience by generational status. Because age is the primary criterion for defining childhood, sociologists who study children have found aging and life course theories that focus on generation to be useful. Thorne (1993) argues for the use of age and gender constructs in understanding children's lives as well as considering

children as social agents. Therefore, it is how children actively construct their worlds as a response to the constraints of age and gender. Passuth (1987) asserts that age is the salient factor for understanding childhood based on her study of how children 5 to 10 years old define themselves as little and big kids in a summer camp setting. Passuth found that age was more important than other stratification markers such as race, social class, and gender. Likewise, Bass (2004) finds that children are active agents but also that age should be considered first as it may structure the opportunities open to children who work in an open market in sub-Saharan Africa; however, other secondary factors such as economic status and gender also structure the life chances of these children. Studies based on children in the United States suggest that age should be considered along with race, gender, and social class to explain how children negotiate power and prestige within their peer groups (Goodwin 1990; Scott 2002).

For other sociologists, *generation* provides the most useful concept to explain the lives of children (Mayall 2000:120). Other researchers (Alanen 2001; Qvortrup 2000) assert that generational relationships are more meaningful than analyses focusing on gender, social class, or ethnicity. While the concept of childhood is not universal, the dichotomy of adult and child is universal and differentiated by age status. This age status patterns differential power relations wherein adults have more power than children and adults typically regulate children's lives. Childhood is produced as a response to the power of adults over children even when children are viewed as actively shaping their childhoods (Walkerdine 2004). Adults write children's books, create children's toys and activities, and often speak on behalf of children (e.g., the law). In this way, the generational divide and unequal authority between adults and children define childhood.

Mayall (2002) uses the generational approach to explain how children contribute to social interaction through their position in the larger social order, wherein they hold a child status. The perspective of children remains meaningful even through the disadvantaged power relationship they hold vis-à-vis adults in the larger social order. It can therefore become a balancing act between considering structural factors or the agency of children in understanding childhood.

The life course perspective holds that individuals of each generation will experience life in a unique way because these individuals share a particular epoch, political economy, and sociocultural context. Foner (1978) explains, "Each cohort bears the stamp of the historical context through which it flows [so that] no two cohorts age in exactly the same way" (p. 343). For example, those who entered adulthood during the Depression have different work, educational, and family experiences compared with individuals who entered adulthood during the affluent 1950s. Those of each cohort face the same larger social and political milieu and therefore may develop similar attitudes.

The *social structural* child posits that childhood may be identified structurally by societal factors that are larger

than age status but help create age status in a childhood process (Qvortrup 1994). Children can be treated by researchers as having the same standing as adult research subjects but also may be handled differently based on features of the social structure. The resulting *social structural* child has a set of universal traits that are related to the institutional structure of societies (Qvortrup 1993). Changes in social norms or values regarding children are tied to universal traits as well as related to the social institutions within a particular society.

## Demographic Approaches to Childhood Studies

Much of American sociology takes a top-down approach to the study of children and views children as being interlinked with the larger family structure. It is in this vein that family instability leading to divorce, family poverty, and family employment may affect children's experiences. For example, Hernandez (1993) examines the American family using U.S. Census data from the twentieth century and notes a series of *revolutions* in the family—such as in decreased family size and the emergence of the two-earner family—that in turn affected children's well-being and childhood experiences. Children from smaller families and higher incomes typically attain more education and take higher-paid employment. Hernandez (1993) contends that mothers' increased participation in work outside the home led to a labor force revolution, which in turn initiated a child care revolution, as the proportion of preschoolers with two working parents increased from 13 percent in 1940 to 50 percent in 1987. More recent data indicate that about 70 percent of the mothers of preschoolers work outside the home (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2002). This child care revolution changes the structure of childhood for most American children. Time diary data indicate that the amount of children's household chores increased from 1981 to 1997 (Hofferth and Sandberg 2001). Lee, Schneider, and Waite (2003) further note that when mothers work in the United States, children do more than their fathers to make up for the household labor gap caused when mothers work. Hence, expectations for children and childhood are altered because of a larger family framework of considerations and expectations.

Family life structures children's well-being. When marriages break up, there are real consequences in terms of transitions and loss of income that children experience. The structural effects on children of living in smaller, more diverse, and less stable families are still being investigated. Moore, Jekielek, and Emig (2002) assert that family structure does matter in children's lives and that children fare better in families headed by two biological, married parents in a low-conflict marriage. Some research indicates that financial support from fathers after a divorce is low (Crowell and Leaper 1994). Coontz (1997) maintains that divorce and single parenthood generally exacerbate preexisting financial uncertainty. These impoverished conditions may diminish children's physical and emotional

development and adversely affect school performance and social behaviors.

However, this is not in all cases. Research (Cherlin et al. 1991) shows that children of separated or divorced families have usually experienced parental conflict and behavioral and educational problems before the family broke up. Hernandez (1993) suggests that the parental conflict and not the divorce or separation may provide more insight into children's disadvantages. Hetherington and Kelly (2002) found that about three-fourths of children whose parents divorced adjusted within six years and ranked the same on behavioral and educational outcomes as children from intact families. Another study (Smart, Neale, and Wade 2001) finds positive attributes of children of divorce as children reported that they were more independent than friends who had not experienced divorce.

The demographic study of children has taken place predominantly from the policy or public family vantage point with the assumption that there are consequences for children. Childhoods are typically framed with a perspective that views children's worlds as being derivative of larger social forces and structures. Very little agency is noted or measured in these studies. While the demographic approach does not offer detailed explanation like research put forth by social constructivist childhood scholars (see James and Prout 1990), this approach provides a valuable perspective for framing and interpreting children's lives.

### Socialization Approaches to Childhood Studies

Research indicates that socialization may affect both children and parents. Developmental psychology allows us to consider how children are affected by the socialization provided by parents, and more recent research put forth by psychologists and sociologists suggests that this exchange of information may be a two-way process.

LaReau (2002) puts forth a more traditional model of socialization as she details how American families of different races and classes provide different childhoods for their children. In her research, the focus is on how children and parents actively construct childhood even as they are possibly constrained by race and class. She found evidence for two types of child rearing, concerted cultivation among middle- and upper-middle-class children, and the emergence of natural growth among working- and lower-class children. LaReau's study describes the process that puts lower- and higher-class children on different roads in childhood that translate into vastly different opportunities in adulthood.

Rossi and Rossi (1990) studied parent-child relationships across the life course and found that parents shape their children as well as their grandchildren through parenting styles, shared genes, social status, and belief systems. Alwin (2001) asserts that while rearing children is both a public and private matter, the daily teaching of children the rules and roles in society largely falls to parents. Furthermore, Alwin (2001) explains how American parental expectations for their children have changed over the last half-century, noting an increased emphasis on

self-discipline through children's activities that help develop autonomy and self-reliance. Zinnecker (2001) notes a parallel trend in Europe toward individualism and negotiation, and away from coercion in parenting styles.

In contrast, Ambert's (1992) *The Effect of Children on Parents* questions the assumptions of the socialization perspective and posits that socialization is a two-way process. Ambert argues that having children can influence one's health, income, career opportunities, values and attitudes, feelings of control, life plans, and the quality of interpersonal relations. She questions the causality of certain problematic children's behaviors, such as clinginess among some young children or frequent crying among premature babies. Ambert contends that children's behavior socializes parents in a patterned way, which agrees with the sentiment of de Winter (1997) regarding autistic children and that Skolnick (1978) regarding harsh child-rearing methods.

Likewise, psychologist Harris (1998) argues that the parental nurture or *socialization* fails to ground the direction of causation with empirical data. She explains that parenting styles are the effect of a child's temperament and that parents' socialization has little influence compared with other influences such as heredity and children's peer groups. Harris's approach, known as group socialization theory, posits that after controlling for differences in heredity, little variance can be explained by children's socialization in the home environment. Harris provides evidence that most children develop one behavioral system that they use at home and a different behavioral system for use elsewhere by middle childhood. Group socialization theory can then explain why immigrant children learn one language in the home and another language outside the home, and their native language is the one they speak with their peers (Harris 1998).

Likewise, other studies (Galinski 1999; Smart et al. 2001) find evidence that children play a supportive role and nurture their parents. In a parallel but opposing direction, other studies suggest that having children negatively affects parents' lifestyles and standards of living (Boocock 1976) and disproportionately and negatively affects women's career and income potentials (Crittenden 2001). Indeed, research indicates that socialization may affect both children and parents. While most research concentrates on the socialization of children by parents and societal institutions, more research should focus on the socialization of parents. In this way, children may be viewed as affecting the worlds of their parents, which in turn may affect children.

### Interdisciplinary Involvement and Implications

Childhood research benefits from the involvement of a diverse range of disciplines. On the surface these approaches appear to have disagreement in terms of methods and theoretical underpinnings, yet these approaches challenge more traditional disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and anthropology to consider what best interprets children's lives. In some cases, the interaction across



disciplines creates new approaches, such as those of sociologists who use general socialization theory from developmental psychology. Similarly, historical research on the value of children being tied to a certain epoch with a specific level of political economy can inform the valuation of children and their labor in poorer countries around the globe today.

There is a need for continued interdisciplinary collaboration, and thought is being given to how children and childhood studies could emerge as a recognized interdisciplinary field of inquiry. Woodhead (2003) offers three models for interdisciplinary effort for advancing the study of children and childhoods: (1) a *clearinghouse* model, (2) a *pick 'n' mix* model, and (3) a *rebranding* model. The *clearinghouse model* (Woodhead 2003) would include all studies of children and childhood, all research questions and methodologies, and all disciplines that are interested. This clearinghouse model would view different approaches to the study of children for their complementary value and would encourage researchers to ask "different but equally valid questions" (James et al. 1998:188).

The *pick 'n' mix model* (Woodhead 2003) envisions that an array of child-centered approaches would be selectively included in the study of children. If this were to happen, the process of selection could complicate and hamper the field of childhood studies in general. Fences may be useful in terms of demarcating the path for childhood scholars but also may obstruct the vista on the other side.

The *rebranding model* (Woodhead 2003) would involve researchers collaborating across disciplines on research involving children while informing and remaining housed within more traditional disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and psychology. In this scenario, children and childhood scholars remain within sociology while also being committed to interdisciplinary involvement. This scenario has served to strengthen sociological research in general. For example, James and Prout (1990) coined the term *sociological study of childhood*, and later James et al. (1998) developed the concept of *sociological child*. More recently, Mayall (2002) has suggested the use of the term *sociology of childhood* to move children and childhood studies to a more central place within sociology. In turn, this strengthens children and childhood studies across disciplines by forging a place for children in the traditional discipline.

The field of interdisciplinary childhood studies has the potential to widen its reach by creating constituencies across older disciplines. Additionally, childhood studies can learn from the development experience of other interdisciplinary fields such as women's studies or gerontology. Oakley (1994:13) asserts the shared concerns across the academic study of women and children because women and children are socially linked and represent social minority groups. In a similar vein, Bluebond-Langner (2000) notes a parallel in scholarly potential for childhood studies of the magnitude of women's studies, predicting that childhood studies will affect the twenty-first century in much the same way as women's studies has the twentieth century.

Weighing the contributions across disciplines, it is clear that developmental psychology has laid the groundwork for the field of childhood studies, yet the resulting conversation across scholars and disciplines has produced a field that is much greater than the contributions of any one contributing discipline. Therefore, childhood scholars have much to gain through conversation and collaboration.

## CONSIDERING SOCIOLOGY AND CHILDHOOD STUDIES

Within sociology, scholars approach the study of children in many ways. Some sociologists take a strict social constructivist approach, while others meld this approach to a prism that considers social structures that are imposed on children. Some sociologists focus on demographic change, while others continue to focus on aspects of socialization as childhoods are constructed through forces such as consumer goods, child labor, children's rights, and public policy. All these scholars add to the research vitality and breadth of childhood studies. In addition, children and childhood studies research centers, degree programs, and courses began to be established in the 1990s, most of which have benefited from the contributions of sociologists and the theories and methods of sociology.

Childhood studies gained firm ground in 1992 in the United States when members of the American Sociological Association (ASA) formed the Section on the Sociology of Children. Later, the section name was changed to the Section on the Sociology of Children and Youth to promote inclusiveness with scholars who research the lives of adolescents. In addition to including adolescents, American sociologists are also explicitly open to all methods and theories that focus on children. The agenda of the Children and Youth Section has been furthered by its members' initiation and continued publication of the annual volume *Sociological Studies of Children* since 1986. In agreement with the ASA section name addition, the volume recently augmented the volume name with *and Youth* and became formalized as the annual volume of ASA Children and Youth Section. The volume was initially developed and edited by Patricia and Peter Adler and later edited by Nancy Mandell, David Kinney, and Katherine Brown Rosier.

Outside the United States, the study of children by sociologists has gained considerable ground through the International Sociological Association Research Group 53 on Childhood, which was established in 1994. Two successful international journals, *Childhood* and *Children and Society*, promote scholarly research on children from many disciplines and approaches. In particular, British childhood researchers have brought considerable steam to the development of childhood studies through curriculum development. Specifically, childhood researchers wrote four introductory textbooks published by Wiley for a target

class on childhood offered by the Open University in 2003. The books are *Understanding Childhood* by Woodhead and Montgomery (2003), *Childhoods in Context* by Maybin and Woodhead (2003), *Children's Cultural Worlds* by Kehily and Swann (2003), and *Changing Childhoods* by Montgomery, Burr, and Woodhead (2003).

The relationship between the discipline of sociology and childhood studies appears to be symbiotic. Even as sociologists assert that the study of children is its own field, this does not preclude the development of childhood studies across disciplinary boundaries. Sociologists capture the social position or status of children and have the methods for examining how childhood is socially constructed or situated within a given society. Sociologists can also continue to find common ground with other childhood scholars from other disciplines to develop better methods and refine theories that explain children's lives. Advances in the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies serves to strengthen the research of sociologists who focus their work on children. Likewise, sociological challenges to the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies since the 1990s have provided useful points of critique and improvement to the study of children's behavior and children's lives.

## **CURRENT AND FUTURE RESEARCH: SOCIAL POLICY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

Current and future research on children falls into two main areas, social policy and children's rights. Arguably, there is some overlap between these two large themes. Indeed, Stainton Rogers (2004) maintains that social policy is motivated by a concern for children, yet children have very little to no political or legal voice. Children do not vote or decide what is in their best interests or what children's rights are. Social policy requires us to consider the intersection of children as dependents or *not yet adults* and children as having certain rights. It has previously been noted that children are citizens and should be treated as citizens but with their own concerns (James and Prout 1997), yet there is still much to be clarified.

Public policy can be used to improve the lives of children. Research has established that poverty matters in the lives of children, as measured in child well-being indicators, and public policies have been enacted to help families rise out of poverty (Hernandez 1993). Research on the impact of increased income after a casino opened on a Cherokee reservation indicates that Native-American children who were raised out of poverty had a decreased incidence of behavior disorders (Costello et al. 2003).

At other times, public policies affect children as a byproduct or consequence. One example is the 1996 Welfare Reform Law (or PRWORA), which made work mandatory for able-bodied, American adults and put time limits of five years and a day on receiving public assistance. Still, much is to be learned as to the effect, if any, of

this legislation on children (Bass and Mosley 2001; Casper and Bianchi 2002). In addition to income, public policy shapes the experience of family life by recognizing some forms while ignoring others. A substantial number of children will experience many family structures and environments as they pass through childhood, regardless of whether the government legitimates all these forms (Clarke 1996). Likewise, examining children's experiences in various family forms is a useful area of current and future study.

Children's rights can be examined in terms of protecting children from an adult vantage point or in terms of providing children civil rights (or having a legal voice). The view of protecting children is a top-down approach positing that children are immature, and so legal protections should be accorded to keep children safe from harm and abuse and offer children a basic level of developmental opportunities. In contrast, the civil rights approach asserts that children have the right to participate fully in decisions that may affect them and should be allowed the same freedoms of other citizens (Landsdown 1994; Saporiti et al. 2005). In addition, the framing of children's rights takes different forms in richer and poorer countries around the globe. For richer countries, granting children rights may involve allowing children civil and political voice, whereas in poorer countries, basic human rights bear out as more important. Child labor is an issue that has been examined in terms of the right of children to learn and be developed and the right of children to provide for oneself (see Bass 2004; Neiwenhuys 1994; Zelizer 1985).

Future studies will also need to consider the relationship between children's rights as children become study subjects. Innovative approaches are being used to include children's voices and input in the research process (Leonard 2005), yet there is still much to be done in this area in terms of developing methodologies that allow children to participate in the research process. Indeed, incorporating children in the research process is a next logical step for childhood studies. However, childhood scholars are adults and therefore not on an equal footing with children (Fine and Sandstrom 1988). Furthermore, there is momentum to include children's perspectives in the research process at the same time that there is a growing concern for children's well-being, which may be adversely affected by their participation as subjects in the research process.

Future research on children should focus on the children's issues through social policies yet also consider children's rights in tandem or as follow-up studies. It is generally the matter of course to take *children* or *youth* as a definitive given and then seek to solve their problems or create policies for them. Future research should focus on practical children's issues and use empirical research projects to increase our knowledge of the nature of childhood. The last 15 years provide evidence to support the idea that childhood researchers should continue to bridge disciplines and even continents to find common ground.

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGING

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**T**he sociological study of aging is concerned with the social aspects of both individual aging and an aging society. The individual experience of aging depends on a variety of social factors, including public policies and programs, economic status, social support, and health status. The importance of the field, and much of the theory and research in this area, is either directly or indirectly influenced by a concern with population aging. Because of this importance, I begin with a discussion of the population dynamics within which research on the sociology of aging is situated.

### THE DEMOGRAPHY OF AN AGING SOCIETY

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Growth in the size of the elderly population and increases in life expectancy have led to population aging, or an increase in the proportion of older people relative to younger people. Currently, those age 65 and over comprise 12 percent of the U.S. population. This is the fastest growing age group and, according to U.S. Census Bureau projections, will comprise nearly 20 percent of the nation's population by 2030 when all members of the baby boom cohorts (born between 1946 and 1964) have turned 65 years (He et al. 2005).

In the United States and many other developed countries, a decline in fertility and mortality rates has resulted in slow growing or stable populations with comparatively old age structures (Hayward and Zhang 2001).

A decreasing birth rate, particularly the sharp decline since the 1960s, has increased the rate of population aging. Additionally, improvements in nutrition, sanitation, and economic development resulted in a change in the leading causes of death from acute illness and infectious disease to chronic and degenerative diseases (Phelan et al. 2004). Consequently, life expectancy at birth in the United States has risen from 47.3 in 1900 to 76.9 in 2000 (He et al. 2005).

These changing demographics create challenges for many social institutions, such as health care and retirement income systems, families, and the labor force, and therefore have important policy implications, especially in the areas of social security, pension, and health care policy. However, population aging is often exaggerated as a social problem, and demographic facts have been used to create irrational fears that the rapidly increasing costs of pension plans and health care, and intergenerational conflict created by the burden of caring for the elderly, will strain our institutions to the breaking point. This phenomenon has been termed “apocalyptic demography” and “alarmist demography” by social scientists who demonstrate that while population aging certainly presents social policy challenges, it will not strain family, health care, labor market, and pension systems as much as rhetoric would lead us to believe (see, e.g., Gee and Gutman 2000). It is within this context of demographic change that the sociology of aging research evolved. I now turn to a discussion of some of the key developments in the field.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE FIELD

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### Early Development

Early theories of aging, appearing in the 1960s, viewed the withdrawal of older persons from active social life as an inevitable product of modernization. Modernization theory argued that the Industrial Revolution and the development of nations had negative consequences for the old (Burgess 1960). The aged became trapped in a “role-less role” as work moved from home into factories, they lost the economic independence that accompanies work, and young people moved to cities, isolating older generations. Early theories of aging focused on adaptation to this role loss as central to “successful” or “normal” aging and satisfaction in later life. Although modernization theory received much criticism and was discredited by historical and cross-cultural evidence, concern with the roles occupied in old age and the status of the aged remained (Marshall 1996).

Influenced by functional and developmental perspectives, disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry 1961) argued that both the aging individual and society benefit from the withdrawal of older persons from aspects of social life, particularly from the labor force. According to disengagement theory, decreased interaction between aging individuals and society was assumed to be a universal process that relieves older individuals of the pressures of adhering to societal norms and eases the transition to death.

In contrast to disengagement theory, but also seeking to explain “normal aging,” in their activity theory, Havighurst, Neugarten, and Tobin (1968) argued that isolation and withdrawal were not part of a natural progression of aging and that psychological and social needs in old age are no different from middle age. This implied that to age optimally, one should stay active and maintain the activities of middle age as long as possible, substituting new activities when necessary.

In continuity theory, Atchley (1989) builds on activity theory to define normal aging, proposing that people attempt to maintain continuity in their lifestyles, activities, and relationships, as they age, through adapting to both internal (attitudes, values, temperament) and external changes (activities, roles, the environment). Robert Atchley (1989) argued that individuals actively attempt to maintain continuity of the self over time, as our conceptions of our self are increasingly tested as we age.

Many research studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s tested and compared disengagement, activity, and continuity theories. They resulted in little support for disengagement theory, and the overall conclusion was that withdrawal is not at all a universal pattern or a normal part of aging. However, while the idea of disengagement as a universal and inevitable process has been abandoned, it left a lasting impression on the field and an ongoing interest in understanding life satisfaction. Research based on activity

theory suggests that the best predictor of life satisfaction in old age is having an intimate network of close friends and relatives (Longino and Kart 1982). Few studies have formally tested continuity theory, but it has drawn criticism for its conceptualization of normal aging as a lack of physical or mental disease (Becker 1993), and from feminist theorists who argue that normal aging is defined around a male model, such that high rates of poverty among older women are indications of pathology (Calasanti 1996).

Over time, the study of aging evolved from a crisis-oriented view of old age as a social problem to an interest in age as a characteristic of social structure and personal biography (George 1995). Two factors made this shift possible. First, understanding the impact and dynamics of the baby boom cohorts played an influential role in the transformation of the field both theoretically and empirically. In the 1960s, social scientists attempted to understand generational differences and how this might affect social change, focusing in particular on the cohorts of the baby boom in each phase of their lives. Theories sought to explain the divergent ideas and values of baby boomers from their parents and grandparents and how this affects social change (e.g., Ryder 1965), and attempted to understand the effects of cohort size on society’s major institutions (Easterlin 1980). During this time, *cohort change*, a central concept in the development of the sociology of aging, gained interest and influence. In describing cohort change, Ryder (1965) argued that social change and population processes are interdependent because the composition of society is always changing due to the dynamics of mortality, fertility, and immigration. The continual change in society’s membership provides the opportunity for new ideas and changes to social norms and institutions. Social change connected to aging also occurs because, as individuals age, they move from one set of roles or positions to another (Hardy and Willson 2002).

Second, age stratification theory (Riley, Johnson, and Foner 1972), a major theoretical perspective that evolved over many years, helped move the field away from the view of age as dysfunction by making the distinction between age as a property of individuals and age as a property of social systems (Dannefer et al. 2005). Age stratification theory argued that age, along with race, gender, and wealth, is a principal category of stratification and differentiation in all societies (Riley et al. 1972). The theory views the stratified age structure as favoring young and middle-aged adults in the distribution of resources. Until her death in 2004, Matilda White Riley continued to refine and extend age stratification theory, introducing many influential theoretical contributions, such as *age-graded roles* and *structural lag*. Structural lag describes the strains and contradictions that may arise from a lack of fit between age-graded roles and individuals as a result of the failure of society to keep up with demographic change and individuals’ changing life course (Riley, Kahn, and Foner 1994).

## Recent Approaches to the Study of Aging

Criticism of age stratification theory began in the 1970s, pointing out that although age is an important source of identity, it often affects life chances less than other dimensions of stratification (Quadagno and Reid 1999). Critics suggest that the functionalist orientation of the age stratification perspective leads to a focus on some themes to the exclusion, or lack of development, of others (Dannefer et al. 2005; Quadagno and Reid 1999). These include a lack of attention to power, conflict, and other bases of stratification, and therefore to macrolevel issues such as the role of social movements in social change (Dannefer et al. 2005).

One neglected area in age stratification theory is within-cohort variation by race, gender, and social class in aging, including the power relations and political processes that produce inequality (Quadagno and Reid 1999). The political economy perspective has been influential through its focus on the experience of aging and old age as situated within a larger social context, in particular the organization of the economy and public policy (Estes, Linkins, and Binney 1996). Researchers who employ this perspective view public policy as a product of the power relations and struggles in a given historical period, as reflected in advantage and disadvantage in class, race, gender, and age relations (Quadagno and Reid 1999). For example, cross-national comparisons have demonstrated that nations with more generous social welfare programs tend to be those dominated by labor and social-democratic parties (Myles 1989). In addition, researchers from this perspective have examined how dominant social institutions, such as the welfare state, create vulnerability and dependency in women throughout their life course and the effect that this has on older women's economic security (Estes 2004; Harrington Meyer 1996).

Feminist approaches to the study of aging address limitations of previous theoretical perspectives, including age stratification theory. Although these approaches are diverse, they share a common understanding of gender relations as forces that shape both social organizations and identities in a manner that privileges men to the disadvantage of women (Calasanti 2004). The key to a feminist approach is the study of men and women in relation to one another and the resulting power differentials. It, therefore, provides an important framework for examining not only the lives of women but also the lives of those who are privileged in one or more dimensions, such as their race, class, or sexual orientation (Calasanti 2004). For example, research has shown that women are more likely to be primary caregivers to parents and spend more time in caregiving than men (Horwitz 1985; Lee, Dwyer, and Coward 1993), and that men and women tend to engage in different kinds of caregiving activities (Campbell and Martin-Matthews 2000; Chang and White-Means 1991). However, more recently, studies from a feminist approach have extended the research on caregiving to examine the

experiences of men as caregivers, and the tension that male caregivers experience between the caregiving role and hegemonic meanings of masculinity (Campbell and Carroll 2006; Kirsi, Hervonen, and Jylhä 2000; Russell 2001). These studies shed insight not only into the meaning of masculinity to male caregivers but also into how manhood relates to gender relations (Calasanti 2004).

Critical gerontology is a prominent strand of sociological theories of aging that incorporates contributions from political economy, feminism, and the humanities (Phillipson 2006). Critical theory provides a critique of the dominant ideology and social order and challenges the underlying interests and goals of groups in power (Baars 1991). A central idea of critical gerontology is that aging is a socially constructed experience and process (Phillipson 2006). In other words, the experience of aging largely depends on social context and cultural meanings of aging—how others react to the aged (Estes 1979). A goal of work in this area is inclusiveness and emphasis on the experiences of disadvantaged or underrepresented older people. At the intersection of critical gerontology, feminist theory, and political economy is the research of Estes and colleagues, which investigates how dominant social institutions shape dependency and vulnerability in women throughout their life course and particularly in old age (e.g., Estes 2004).

Research on the social construction of identity represents one of the most extensive areas of contemporary research in aging. The focus of studies from this perspective is on identity management within the context of aging and how various defining contexts, including age, are used to construct identities in particular social situations. This perspective draws on the traditions of phenomenology and symbolic interaction, and research relies primarily on qualitative methods such as grounded theory, ethnography, and narratives of aging (Gubrium and Holstein 1999). A classic example of research examining questions of identity is Sarah Matthews's (1979) study on the management of self-identity among old women, who develop strategies to deal with the stigma of stereotypes of infirmity, senility, and worthlessness. A second classic study from this perspective, *Living and Dying at Murray Manor* (Gubrium 1975), used the phenomenological concept of "social worlds" to show that a single organization, a nursing home, contains different "worlds of meaning" based on the social location of the participants. The administrative staff, nurses, and the residents are not homogeneous in the meanings that they assign to living and dying.

The life course perspective (e.g., Elder 1995; George 1993; see Mortimer and Shanahan 2003) is currently a dominant approach in the sociology of aging and is an often-cited theoretical framework for examining issues surrounding changes in statuses across time. This approach examines differences in aging across cohorts by emphasizing that individual biography is situated within the context of social structure and historical circumstance. The processes are influenced by aggregate individual-level decisions and behaviors, in addition to structural and

historical processes that constrain and direct behavior (Hardy and Waite 1997). Glen Elder's (1974) *Children of the Great Depression* was one of the first examples of microlevel research using longitudinal data on children's lives to systematically study change in families and children over time. Recent research from this perspective covers a wide array of topics, examining inequality among women as they age (Willson 2003), couples' retirement transitions (Moen, Kim, and Hofmeister 2001), caregiving careers and women's health (Pavalko and Woodbury 2000), the role of grandparents in grandchildren's lives (King and Elder 1997), and how life course transitions affect intergenerational relationships (Kaufman and Uhlenberg 1998), among many examples. It has also demonstrated that life transitions have become less tied to age, so that "events in family, education, work, health and leisure domains occur across the life span at different (and many at increasingly later) ages than previously expected" (O'Rand and Campbell 1999:61).

This discussion is by no means exhaustive. Any theoretical framework can be applied to the study of aging, and research includes topics from across the spectrum of sociological subfields. From the early days of the study of aging, sociologists have taken an interdisciplinary approach, and today sociologists continue to draw on a diverse array of theoretical perspectives and methods to understand aging and, in turn, have informed other fields of research (Marshall 1996). However, an ongoing criticism of the social scientific study of aging is that it lacks "theoretical rigor" and tends toward the descriptive (see Hagestad and Dannefer 2001 for such a discussion). This is due in part to such research being primarily problem-driven rather than theory-driven (Meyers 1996). It also has been argued that this absence is due in part to the outpacing of systematic sociological theorizing on aging by empirical studies made possible by advances in quantitative methodology and the availability of new longitudinal data (Dannefer and Uhlenberg 1999). It is therefore appropriate to turn to a discussion of some of the key developments and challenges in the methods used in the sociological study of aging.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND INNOVATIONS

Both qualitative and quantitative methods play an important role in sociological aging research. In this discussion, I will focus on quantitative methods because over the past decades, a major development in aging research has been an increase in the quality and sophistication of both quantitative research methods and data (George 1995). The social context in which the biological process of aging is embedded creates variability in the experience of aging—between individuals, between cohorts, and over time. Many of the topics studied in aging research are quite demanding methodologically. For example, for many questions addressed using a life course perspective, longitudinal data

are often necessary to allow the researcher to locate lives in time and help in the specification of causal relationships (Alwin and Campbell 2001). Longitudinal data not only require extensive resources to collect but also require sophisticated methods to analyze. However, as the limitations of cross-sectional data have become well understood, the number and use of longitudinal data sets have risen (George 1995). Some of the most unique quantitative developments in recent years involve the use of longitudinal data to study life-course trajectories or long-term patterns of stability and change over time. Trajectories model life-course dynamics, such as individual change over time, and important interindividual differences in change over the life course. For example, using growth curve models, researchers can examine how factors such as the experience of long-term economic advantage or disadvantage, as well as individual characteristics such as race/ethnicity and gender, affect health and well-being. These techniques are at the cutting edge of research that tries to understand life-course dynamics and life-course heterogeneity.

In the 1960s, sociologists realized that there are major differences in cross-sectional age comparisons and longitudinal patterns (Dannefer and Uhlenberg 1999). Generalizations about age differences drawn from cross-sectional data are suspect because by comparing people in different age groups at one point in time, it is impossible to separate the effects of age from the effects of aging through different time periods (cohort effects). The confounding of age, period, and cohort in research findings presents methodological puzzles such as when we compare people of different ages at one point in time, cohort (year of birth) and age (current year minus year of birth) cannot be distinguished. If we compare people of the same or different ages across time, cohort, age, and period (historical time) are confounded. This is because age equals the current year (period) minus birth year (cohort). Herbert J. Blalock, Jr. (1966) referred to this as the "problem of identification." Therefore, in cross-sectional studies it is not possible to determine if age differences in, for example, attitudes, are due to changes that accompany aging, cohort differences, or historical events. Although this problem was identified at least 40 years ago, studies continue to be published in which the author makes claims about "aging" from cross-sectional data. There are no easy answers to the problem of identification. Careful conceptualization of how a shared social consciousness is created among cohort members, and how this differs from other cohorts, is necessary to understand the linkage between cohort change, social change, and aging (Hardy and Waite 1997).

## CURRENT RESEARCH IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGING

While the sociology of aging is distinct and unique, researchers in many other subfields of sociology are interested in the study of aging. This is especially evident with

the growing popularity of the life course perspective and its emphasis on old age as a culmination of earlier life experiences. In addition, an attempt to understand how changes in demographic forces affect social interaction and social institutions drives many areas of interest in the sociology of aging. Following is a sampling of current research.

### **Family Relationships and Social Support**

One focus of research in the sociology of aging is social support in old age. Individual's social support systems include the network of relatives, friends, and organizations that provide both instrumental support (such as help with activities of daily living) and emotional support (such as making the individual feel reassured and loved). Studies show that most old people have an extensive social support network of family and friends. A wide array of research has focused on family relationships and social support, investigating topics such as marital satisfaction in later life (Hyuck 2001), parent-adult child relationships (Pillemer and Suito 2002; Rossi and Rossi 1990; Silverstein, Parrott, and Bengtson 1995), sibling relationships (Campbell et al. 1999; White 2001), and grandparent-grandchild relationships (Kemp 2003; Chan and Elder 2000). For example, a primary interest is parent-adult child relationship quality, and how relationship quality influences the provision of social support to parents in their old age. Studies in this area have been primarily framed by two approaches: the solidarity perspective, which focuses on the strength of intergenerational family ties (Silverstein and Bengtson 1997) and the conflict perspective, which focuses on the conflicts that arise in relationships with older family members who require social support and care (for review, see Marshall, Matthews, and Rosenthal 1993). Recently, a third approach views intergenerational relations as ambivalent, or characterized by contradictory emotions and cognitions held toward people, social relations, and structures, with roots in structured social relations (Connidis and McMullin 2002; Luescher and Pillemer 1998). The concept of ambivalence has sparked empirical investigation in this area of research (Pillemer and Suito 2002; Willson, Shuey, and Elder 2003).

### **Caregiving**

Related to research on family and social support is a large body of literature that specifically examines caregiving to older family members. One explanation for the interest in this area is the lengthening life span and the greater potential reliance on family members that accompanies an extended old age (Pearlin et al. 2001). Much research in this area has focused on the consequences of caregiving for caregivers, such as caregiver stress and burden and their effects on health (George 1986; Pearlin and Aneshensel 1994). While this research has documented the negative effects of caregiving, it has also demonstrated that

in general women are likely to benefit from multiple roles depending on the mix of roles and their contribution to self-identity (e.g., Moen, Robison and Fields 1994).

Research in this area also has demonstrated that whether women are employed or not, they provide extensive care to older family members (Martin-Matthews and Campbell 1995). This often means altering their work patterns, which can affect job security and possibilities for advancement, or managing and purchasing alternative sources of care (Martin-Matthews and Campbell 1995). Researchers emphasize that the shift in caregiving style to management rather than hands-on is not a suggestion of the breakdown of the family or lack of love and concern for family members but is a sign of social change (Connidis 2002). In the future, this style may also extend into retirement, when previously employed women who had hired others to care for their children may be more comfortable with purchasing caregiving services for their parents, their spouse, and themselves. However, this is contingent on the services being available, and they often are not (Connidis 2002).

### **Poverty and Inequality in Old Age: The Importance of Gender and Race/Ethnicity**

Although the elderly poverty rate is roughly the same as that of younger adults, within the age group 65 and over, there is much variation in income and wealth. For example, women comprise 57.3 percent of the population 65 and older, but are about 70 percent of the older population living in poverty (He et al. 2005). A major concern in the study of aging has been women's economic security in old age, and the resources available from family members and policies such as social security. Because women tend to marry men who are older than themselves, and because of men's shorter life expectancy, older women outnumber older men in the United States (He et al. 2005). High proportions of women are widows and live alone in old age. As a result, they have a greater chance of being institutionalized and are more likely to live in poverty than men. In addition, because women experience greater discontinuity in the labor force, moving in and out to accommodate family responsibilities, they have shorter and less stable employment histories. Research investigating the long-term effects of these factors has found that women are less likely than men to be covered by pensions, and across the life course and in later life they have incomes that are far lower than men's, which translates into economic insecurity in old age (Farkas and O'Rand 1998; Han and Moen 1999; Shuey and O'Rand 2004).

Race and ethnicity play an important role in the relationship between gender and economic security as well. In the United States, there are large differences in socioeconomic status across racial groups. In 2003, the proportion of non-Hispanic whites over the age of 65 living in poverty was 8 percent, compared with 23.7 percent of blacks and 19.5 percent of Hispanics (He et al. 2005). Whites 65 years

and older have rates of high school graduation that are twice that of Hispanics and almost twice that of blacks (Williams and Wilson 2001). There are large racial/ethnic differences in income, however, racial/ethnic differences in net worth are even larger—recent estimates place the financial assets of white households at 11 times that of black households and 8 times that of Hispanic households (Smith 1997).

The life course perspective draws attention to cumulative processes and the social transitions between life phases that create variation in life trajectories such as health and economic status (Dannefer 1987; O’Rand 1996). Within this framework, cumulative advantage/disadvantage theory (CAD) explains a process through which early advantages and disadvantages become compounded over the life course, leading to greater intracohort inequality at the oldest ages. CAD seeks to understand how heterogeneity within cohorts changes with age and how social processes may interact to produce intracohort variation and stratification (Dannefer 2003). Studies have examined the cumulative effect of a number of social factors on changes in late-life inequality, including the shift to retirement income (Pampel and Hardy 1994), marriage and employment among women (Willson 2003), and education (Elman and O’Rand 2004). More recently, CAD has been applied to investigations of the relationship between socioeconomic status and change in health inequality with age and produce mixed findings. Some studies find support for cumulative advantage (Ferraro and Kelley 2003; Ross and Wu 1996), while other studies find evidence of a convergence of health trajectories with age (House et al. 1994).

## Health and Aging

Health in later life is the result of multiple processes and their effects over the life course. These include a mixture of sociodemographic resources and risks, behavioral risk factors, and biological processes. Structural barriers to health care and preventative medicine as well as greater exposure to stressors, occupational and environmental risks, and health risk behaviors are differentially distributed by socioeconomic position. Psychosocial resources, which may buffer the adverse effects of stress, are also differentially distributed—they include coping style, social support, and attitudes such as optimism and a sense of personal control (see Thoits 1995 for a review). The presence or absence of these behaviors, exposures, and resources “accumulate” health advantages in some individuals and disadvantages in others and are implicated in the strong relationship between indicators of socioeconomic status and health across the life course (Frytak, Harley, and Finch 2003).

Although health naturally declines with age, it does not decline at the same rate for all older people. There are large differences in survival to old age, and some live many more years without a functional limitation. Female life expectancy historically has been higher than male life

expectancy at most ages, with both black and white women living longer than their male counterparts (He et al. 2005). In the search for explanations for sex differences in life expectancy, studies have examined differences in social roles, behaviors, attitudes, and biological risks between men and women (Nathanson 1984; Verbrugge 1989; for review, see He et al. 2005); however, a conclusive explanation has yet to be found.

Differences in life expectancy also exist by race/ethnicity. In 2000, the racial gap in life expectancy was 5.7 years (He et al. 2005); however, there is some debate over whether racial differences in life expectancy grow smaller and even reverse at the oldest ages. Some researchers argue that the racial crossover is due to unreliable data (e.g., Coale and Kisker 1986), whereas others contend that it is real and a product of the “survival of the fittest” phenomenon (e.g., Johnson 2000). This perspective contends that among the socially disadvantaged, only the healthiest and fittest survive to the oldest ages.

There are gender and race differences in functional limitations as well. In contrast to women’s advantage in life expectancy, women have consistently higher levels of functional limitations compared with men in their same racial/ethnic group after adjusting for socioeconomic and background factors (Read and Gorman 2005). Race differences in socioeconomic status have a profound effect on race differences in health. Over the life course, inequalities in education, access to well-paying jobs with benefits, and housing all negatively influence the health of African Americans, such that fewer survive to old age than whites (Williams and Collins 1995; Williams and Wilson 2001). However, health disparities by race are not completely explained by socioeconomic status, and whites and blacks of the same socioeconomic status have different overall health outcomes (Farmer and Ferraro 2005).

The study of health and aging is a burgeoning field. In addition to improving our understanding of gender and race differences in health across the life course and in later life, research in this area is largely focused on improving our understanding of the causes of inequality in physical and mental health and the role of various factors like social support.

## Work and Retirement

Sociologists of aging emphasize that although on the surface it may appear that retirement is a “natural” response to human aging and older people’s declining capacities, in reality retirement policy developed in the twentieth-century is an attempt to reconcile a changing economy with an aging population and surplus labor (Hardy and Shuey 2000). Research on work and retirement is motivated by both scholarly and public policy interests, particularly in extending the working lives of the baby boom cohorts (Henretta 2001). In the United States, men’s labor force participation has experienced a long decline due in part to rising levels of income and wealth, disability



benefits, and the level of pensions and social security (Henretta 2001). However, since the mid-1990s, the labor force participation of men in their 60s has stabilized and perhaps increased (He et al. 2005). While men's labor force participation rates have decreased over the last half century, women's labor force participation rates have increased, so that the difference between rates of labor force participation for older men and women (55–64 years) has declined in recent years, from a gap of 30.8 percent in 1980 to 12 percent in 2003 (He et al. 2005).

Research in this area is largely framed by the general hypothesis that patterns of individual work careers and retirement pathways are becoming increasingly heterogeneous. "Retirement" itself has become increasingly difficult to define and measure, and research indicates that career patterns later in life are more variable than in the past. For example, studies of "blurred" versus "crisp" patterns of labor force exit find that about one quarter of individuals between the ages of 55 and 74 years experience multiple changes in labor force status before finally exiting the labor force for good (Mutchler et al. 1997). Reentry to the labor force is likely to be into part-time work, and often reflects job loss or the receipt of early retirement incentives. In addition, traditional assumptions about retirement are based on white middle-class men's experiences of a stable work history, with a clear beginning and end followed by retirement income. They do not represent the experiences of women or a substantial minority of the older population, including African Americans (Calasanti 1996; Mutchler et al. 1997).

Research in this area also has investigated what motivates the retirement decision (e.g., Hardy, Hazelrigg, and Quadagno 1996; Quadagno and Quinn 1997), changing pension types and uses (e.g., Shuey 2004), the joint timing of retirement for women and men (e.g., Henretta, O'Rand, and Chan 1993; Pienta and Hayward 2002), and heterogeneity in retirement pathways, such as blurred exits from the labor force and reentry (Elder and Pavalko 1993; Hayward, Crimmins, and Wray 1994; Mutchler et al. 1997).

## End of Life

Death and dying has become a major focus of medicine, social sciences, ethics, and religion (Lawton 2001). Like aging, dying is both a biological process and an experience that occurs in a social context (Field and Cassell 1997). The social context of death has changed quite drastically over the last century. In contrast to a few generations ago when most people died at home, today, most Americans die in hospitals or nursing homes surrounded by professionals in addition to family (Wilkinson and Lynn 2001). In addition, increases in longevity have led to long-term, chronic conditions associated with aging becoming the major pathway to death (Wilkinson and Lynn 2001).

A large body of literature has examined attitudes toward death and how they change with age. Middle age is a period of reflection and heightened sense of our own

mortality, and as people grow older, they tend to think and talk more about death and fear it less (Marshall 1986). Life review, or the tendency to reminisce about one's experiences, is a process that allows the aged to find meaning in past events and to integrate their experiences into a cohesive life story (Marshall 1986).

A central question addressed by this literature is, what actually constitutes the end of life? The concepts of "living" and "dying" exist on a continuum, and dying can be considered as a process. Quality of life at the end of life, and how to measure it, is perhaps the most-discussed topic in this field of study (Lawton 2001). Measurement is difficult because quality of life includes many dimensions, such as physical functioning, economic demands, social relationships, and spirituality, and some are more amenable to measurement than others. A second large body of literature examines decisions that are made regarding the end of life, particularly concerning treatment preferences and advanced directives (e.g., Lambert et al. 2005). Doctors increasingly have at their disposal modern technologies to treat patients and sustain life. Many legal and ethical questions related to the preservation of human dignity have become issues for the dying, their families, and their physicians. The ability to prolong life has increased awareness of and interest in advanced directives that specify individuals' wishes in the event they are unable to express them. This is a growing area of research.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Research in the sociology of aging using advances in longitudinal data and methods is proliferating and will continue to increase our understanding of the complex dynamics of the social experience of aging. However, there are increasing calls for similar advances in sociological theories of aging. Scholars of the sociology of aging now call for "more attention to the development and exposition of ambitious theories that have the power to provoke controversy and force investigators to speculate more broadly about the meaning of their findings" (George 1995:S1). The sociology of aging tends to be oriented toward addressing the problems and realities faced by both aging individuals and an aging society. In addition, it is argued that with increasing pressure to fund research through granting agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the focus of much work in the field is oriented toward the application of research findings to specific pressing problems rather than toward the advancement of theoretical development. These scholars remind us that theory provides a lens through which to make sense of our observations and to integrate those observations into a cumulative understanding of aging (Bengtson and Schaie 1999).

A challenge to the development of theories of aging is the criticism and rejection of earlier theories on the basis that they ignored power relations and the diversity of experiences within cohorts. There are ongoing calls for

greater recognition of diversity in aging research. McMullin (2000) argues that one reason research on aging tends to be atheoretical is that the state of aging theory is inadequate with regard to diversity and not well suited to diversity research. Rather than simply overlooking theoretical explanations for their findings, researchers are impeded from making explicit links between empirical generalizations and larger explanatory frameworks. Research has begun in earnest to document diversity in many realms of later life; however, current theories of aging do not adequately incorporate interlocking sets of power relations that structure social life, such as class, age, gender, ethnicity/race, and sexual orientation (McMullin 2000). Rather, these power relations tend to be viewed as individual characteristics that create difference (Calasanti 1996). McMullin (2000) encourages drawing on the strengths of existing theory and modifying it to include the components and complexities of diversity research.

The recognition of diversity will become increasingly important over the coming decades, as the U.S. population ages and includes a higher proportion of elders from minority groups. Traditionally, research interest has been dominated by studies of differences between blacks and whites in old age. However, there is a growing emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity and important intergroup and intragroup differences among older cohorts (Williams and Wilson 2001). Thus, there is a call for scholars to turn their focus to diverse populations that have been neglected in social research, such as the array of ethnic backgrounds that tend to be lumped under the category *Hispanic*, and middle-class African Americans, who we know much less about because of the focus on poverty and disadvantage (Calasanti and Slevin 2001). In addition, globalization and increased rates of migration raise major issues both for the discipline and for understanding the lives of older people, in part due to the effects of global competition on the shift away from lifetime jobs (Phillipson 2006).

Second, there is a need for a greater understanding and refinement of aspects of our current theorizing. It has been argued that despite the growing influence of the life course perspective, our understanding of the social forces that shape the life course is still in an early stage because of a lack of development of social theory in this area (George

1995). Many of the theoretical and conceptual issues put forth by the life course perspective have not been adequately conceptualized and measured empirically. For example, methodologists have only very crudely measured some components of CAD, and some studies have “tested” CAD theory using cross-sectional data, which has been recognized as misguided for almost half a century for reasons discussed earlier in this chapter.

In addition, there is an important lack of dialogue between methodologists and theorists over the implications of selection processes for both theory building and empirical generalizations. From both a theoretical and empirical standpoint, the sociology of aging is often concerned with long-term processes. However, neither current theory nor research adequately accounts for the nonrandom exclusion of older respondents from analytic samples due to death or illness. We know that the most disadvantaged in society have the highest incidence of morbidity and mortality—they are the least likely to survive to ages 65 and older. Yet our theoretical perspectives regarding inequality do not account for selective mortality, and our conclusions from empirical studies rarely acknowledge the impact of selective mortality on results. This is an issue that is particularly relevant for data collection efforts that begin in midlife with hopes of drawing conclusions related to inequality in socioeconomic characteristics, or characteristics closely linked to socioeconomic status, such as health. Studies of the life course are affected by the relationship between socioeconomic status, race, gender, and health, and selective mortality influences the conclusions that we draw about both the aging process and the age structure of society more generally. Furthering our understanding of long-term processes, at both the micro and the macro levels, requires a sophisticated level of theoretical conceptualization, measurement, and methodology.

The sociology of aging is an important sociological subfield, drawing on and contributing to many other areas of sociology, and other disciplines. This area of research is by definition shaped by the social change associated with its topic of study. The field continues to evolve as scholars rise to the challenges presented by a changing world and changing subjects.

# THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEATH AND DYING

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Death and attendant matters have been seminal topics of reflection, disputatious debate, and other modes of social discourse since the dawn of civilization and, presumably, also among the people who pre-date civilization.

Over the centuries, scholars of many stripes have spoken to the matter of death and documented their musings. Philosophers have pondered the meaning of life and death. Theologians have posited notions and persuasions with regard to eschatological scenarios. Historians have documented myriad configurations of death-related behavior from the past. Poets and novelists have waxed eloquently on their conceptualizations of death and dying. Archeologists have discovered ancient ruins and artifacts and interpreted the meanings of such discoveries with concern for the patterns of life and death among ancient peoples. Scientists and medical doctors have probed the physiological dimensions of life and death. Missionaries have reported unfamiliar patterns of death-related behavior and beliefs of the exotic people with whom they have lived and to whom they have ministered. More recently, anthropologists have observed and analyzed death-related values, rituals, and ceremonies of the preliterate and folk groups they study.

Thus, by the twentieth century, an enormous body of literature, information, and knowledge focusing on death and dying, and related matters from many intellectual and academic perspectives, had accumulated. Curiously missing from this corpus of knowledge was any significant contributions from the academic disciplines of psychology and sociology, although it is true that Freud (whose life and career spanned the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) had

spoken of topics such as the difference between mourning and melancholia and the process of dealing with death (Freud [1917] 1959). Mourning is the normal process that attends the grief experienced when a loved one dies. Melancholia is the malady that attends depression. He also discussed the notion of the human belief in personal immortality. In effect, Freud ([1913] 1954) posited that we could not experience anxiety about our own death and observed that “our own death is indeed quite unimaginable . . . at bottom nobody believes in his own death . . . [and] in the unconscious everyone of us is convinced of his own immortality” (p. 304).

On the sociological side, Émile Durkheim, the early French sociologist, conducted extensive research on suicide rates and how they were related to different aspects of social solidarity. He published the results of his research on suicide at the turn of the century, and his monograph (1951) became a classic over time.

## THE PAST AND PRESENT IN THANATOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

It is challenging to relate the historical development of the sociology of death and dying because the study of death has been so interdisciplinary that it is difficult to disentangle the many strands of research and scholarship from the different disciplines that have addressed the social dimensions of death and dying.

Because of the complex blend of interdisciplinary social science research and scholarship that has made up the corpus of knowledge in the study of death and dying,

some writers have been more prone to use somewhat more generic labels than the sociology of death, the psychology of death, and so on. Some have grouped the literature on this topic into the more general topic of “death education” (Pine 1977), while others have spoken on the subject of the “death awareness movement” (Doka 2003). In the case of the former, Pine (1977) reflects that “Death Education as an *academic discipline* [italics added] is a fairly recent phenomenon, dating from the early 1960’s” (p. 57).

This label refers to the interest in death and dying that arose among social science scholars in the mid- to late 1950s and the 1960s, which led to the development of college courses in various disciplinary departments that address various aspects of death and dying; the inauguration of several scientific journals focusing on the topic; the convening of conferences and workshops; and the publishing of textbooks, monographs, and anthologies on the subject of death and dying.

The label *death awareness movement* refers to the reawakening of scholarly (and public) interest in death and dying after a half-century hiatus during the “death denial” period. Of this renewal of interest, Doka (2003) observes,

The term death awareness movement refers to a somewhat amorphous yet interconnected network of individuals, organizations, and groups. . . . The individuals and groups involved in this amorphous and far-reaching network—in reality a social movement—share a common focus (although not necessarily common goals, models or methods); that focus is dying, death, and bereavement. (P. 50)

Many scholars who address death and dying simply use the generic label of “thanatology” to refer to the extensive interdisciplinary, intertwined, and often fugitive literature, as well as the various research theoretical and methodological perspectives and strategies used in the examination of the social dimensions of death, dying, and bereavement.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, social science literature was silent on the topic, save, perhaps, some anthropological literature that focused on the customs and behavior of some preliterate and folk cultures, including their funeral practices (see, e.g., Frazer 1913; Rivers [1911] 1926; Tylor 1926; Malinowski 1938).

By the 1920s, social science scholars were beginning to develop a modest interest in the topics of death and dying. Vanderlyn R. Pine (1977:59–60), in his very definitive and meticulous exposition on the sociohistorical development of death education, reports that there were a handful of social science books and articles that appeared during the 1920s and 1930s. In his elaborate exposition, Pine specifically mentions Gebhart’s (1928) critical analysis of the American funeral and the undertaker. His essential focus was on the cost of funerals, which he believed to be excessively high. Interestingly, this criticism of the high cost of funerals has continued to be a topic of scholarly discourse for more than 70 years. The

focus on the funeral director, the funeral home, and the social dynamics of the funeral has been one of the major strands of research until today.

Pine (1977:59) also mentions the research work of Thomas D. Eliot, a sociologist, who focused his attention on grief and bereavement (1930a, 1930b, 1933). This focus on grief and bereavement has also become a major research strand in the social sciences. Pine (1977:60), in his comprehensive treatment of the topic, also mentions two other pieces of death-related scholarship that appeared in the 1940s. He mentions *The Child’s Discovery of Death* authored by Sylvia Anthony (1940). Anthony’s book called attention to the awareness of death experiences by children. The concern with the awareness of death became an important strand of research in later years. Pine (1977:60) additionally discussed the importance of the work of the psychiatrist Erich Lindemann, who published an article in 1944 that focused on the topic of acute grief and how it could be managed. Lindemann posited the notion that grief was normal and that it could be resolved. His research was based on the survivors of the Coconut Grove disastrous fire in Boston in 1942, in which 490 persons died (Doka 2003:51).

After upward of a half-century of cultural avoidance of the subject of death and dying in the United States, the human toll of World War II could not be ignored or hidden. Several of the countries involved in World War II, such as Russia and Germany, suffered enormous losses in both military and civilian populations. Rosenberg and Peck (2003:224) report that during World War II, there were 20 million military deaths and 30 million civilian deaths. Firebomb air raids such as those that destroyed Hamburg and Dresden in Germany and the atomic bomb raids of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan took the lives of more than 100,000 civilians per bombing raid. The specter of the atomic bomb with the capability of killing millions could not be erased from our minds, and death was again a seminal preoccupation of the population (see Lifton 1963; Pine 1977:63; Doka 1983:41–42). With television, the public could have immediate access to wars, natural disasters, and accidents and the megadeaths that accompanied such events. It was inevitable that death would again emerge as a topic of public and private discourse and academic and scientific scrutiny.

This reawakening of interest in death became known as the death awareness movement (Doka 2003:50). Component to this movement were scholarly efforts to explore, examine, and analyze the social dimensions of death and dying. Although the movement got under way with some momentum in the 1950s, the precise origin of the emergent, large-scale scholarly interest in death is subject to disputatious debate. Doka (2003:50) suggests that the movement originated at a symposium arranged by Herman Feifel at the 1956 American Psychological Association convention. A group of scholars interested in the field of death and dying participated in the symposium. Doka describes this event as follows:

As a social movement, the death awareness movement had considerable success in the last half of the 20th century. From a small gathering of scholars at a 1956 professional meeting, thousands of college-level courses on the topics of death and dying are now offered. (P. 50)

Pine (1977:60), however, notes that the sociologist William M. Kephart published the first empirical, sociological study of death in 1950, examining the question of status after death. The reawakening of interest in death at a national level, however, may well have started a few years earlier with a fictional narrative. In 1948, Evelyn Waugh's (Evelyn Waugh was the author's pen name; his full name was Evelyn Arthur St. John Waugh) scathing and satirical novella *The Loved One* was published. This book was about a lavish and ostentatious cemetery (a thinly disguised Forest Lawn Cemetery), a pet cemetery, and the morbid activities of some of the people who worked at both. It was a national hit and very popular reading on many college campuses.

This novel demonstrated that death had a humorous (even if doleful) aspect. It demonstrated that one could laugh at death and be entertained by it. If the public could respond in a positive fashion to a satirically humorous novel about death (and the public did), then death could once again be a topic of public, and subsequently scholarly, interest. Robert W. Habenstein's (1949) early scholarly effort, his master's thesis, *A Sociological Study of the Cremation Movement in the United States*, was defended at the University of Chicago in 1949. It would appear that Habenstein's scholarly attention to the topic of death and dying actually preceded Kephart's research.

Further sociological interest in death and dying was demonstrated by Habenstein's (1955) doctoral dissertation, *The American Funeral Director: A Study in The Sociology of Work*, at the University of Chicago. It is interesting to note that, as the title implies, Habenstein apparently considered his research on funeral directors to be more research in the sociology of work than research on death and dying. In the same year, Habenstein and William M. Lamers (1955) published *The History of American Funeral Directing*. They followed this book with a second book, *Funeral Customs the World Over*, in 1960. The first book was rich in historical detail, and the second was an extensive cross-cultural survey. No doubt a number of scholars in the area of death and dying became involved in research on this topic through an original interest and research in the sociology of work and occupational sociology.

At about this time, a number of scholarly publications on death and dying appeared that provided some significant momentum to the death awareness movement. In 1955, a British social anthropologist, Geoffrey Gorer, authored an entry in a book that he edited. Gorer discussed modern society's cultural tendency to deny or ignore death and explored the background factors that gave impetus to this tendency (Doka 2003:51). In 1965, Gorer's book was reprinted and became one of the seminal works in the study of death and dying.

In 1959, the American sociologist LeRoy Bowman published *The American Funeral*. Bowman's book was very critical of what he perceived as the excessively high cost of funerals, the overly extravagant funeral practices, and the funeral industry. This book was not widely cited at that time or even today and has not been very influential in academic circles since then, but it has, however, provided a jaundiced template for various books subsequently published that were also very critical of, if not hostile to, American funeral practices, the high cost of funerals, and the funeral industry.

Pine (1977:63) makes mention of a similarly critical book, *The High Cost of Dying* (Harmer 1963), which had an extremely negative perception of the high cost of American funerals. This book may well have been something of a product of Bowman's book. This book was also not very influential in academic circles.

In the same year, a trade book, *The American Way of Death*, authored by Jessica Mitford (1963), had a sensational impact on the American public and became an overnight bestseller. The book essentially covered the same criticisms related in Bowman's earlier book, but in a more journalistic and jaundiced fashion. Doka (2003:51) speaks of Mitford's work as being from "the muckraking tradition." Mitford's book was not only a national bestseller, its theme was also very influential. Doka (2003:51), for example, asserts that the later interest in memorial societies and the possibility of less expensive arrangements for the funeralization of a deceased loved one was spawned by Mitford's book. As Doka (2003) details this impetus,

*The American Way of Death* also generated interest in memorial societies and led to the development of local associations that would offer or arrange for members to receive dignified funeral services at reasonable cost, sometimes in conjunction with specified funeral service firms. This movement represented an early attempt on the part of Americans to organize collectively around areas related to dying and death and to gain a sense of control over the process. (P. 51)

As Doka (2003:51) also points out, Mitford's book and the popular interest in death and dying, and most especially the high cost of funerals, generated governmental interest in the cost and pricing practices associated with funeralization. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) began to examine these matters, and in 1984, the FTC required that all funeral homes in the United States "itemize their fees and that consumers can have access to pricing information over the phone" (Leming and Dickinson 2006:397).

One widely cited work on death and dying is the psychologist Herman Feifel's (1959) edited book *The Meaning of Death*. In this collection of essays, a number of seminal dimensions of death and dying, such as the dying patient, suicide, the fear of death, modern art and death, death and religion, children's view of death, and various essays on philosophy and death, to mention but a few, were

explored. A number of contemporary scholars, such as Pine (1977) and Doka (2003), consider Feifel's anthology to be one of the more influential scholarly works of the time. Doka, for example, asserts that "this book clearly established death studies as an academic discipline and offered scholars clear evidence of the wide range of issues encompassed by the study of death and dying" (p. 51).

In a similar, very positive assessment of Feifel's edited work, Pine (1977:62) observes that most authorities agree that it was the most important single work that familiarized the scholarly community with the issues and concerns of dying and death. Moreover, it provided a landmark of legitimacy for the newly emerging field.

It is curious that the emergence of the death awareness movement and the scholarly examination of death and dying by social scientists have been attributed in large measure to Feifel's edited book, inasmuch as other books and articles on death and dying had been previously published. These previous publications, however, did have a disciplinary perspective, such as psychological or sociological. Feifel's book contained essays that addressed a variety of issues related to death and dying and featured authors from a number of disciplines, including the humanities as well as the behavioral sciences, and provided an interdisciplinary perspective.

In 1958, various sociological scholars began to come to the forefront with consciousness-raising publications that gave momentum to the sociological examination of death and dying and also attempted to legitimate it as a compelling area of research. Particularly notable in this endeavor were William Faunce and Robert Fulton (1958), who published their provocative article "The Sociology of Death: A Neglected Area of Research." While recognizing the contributions of earlier scholars such as Eliot (1930a, 1930b, 1933) and Kephart (1950), Faunce and Fulton presented and discussed a number of death-related social behaviors and the attendant "rich research possibilities," as they phrased it. Certainly, their article generated a much wider range of interest among sociologists, inasmuch as articles and books concerning death-related issues were subsequently published in the years following.

The study of death and dying, however, continued as an interdisciplinary effort, and does so today. In this regard, in May 1963, the journal *The American Behavioral Scientist* published a special issue, "Social Research and Life Insurance" (Riley 1963). The articles focusing on social research mostly dealt with death and dying, and certainly the topic of life insurance. Contributors to this issue included individuals from the life insurance industry and authors from several of the social sciences, including some prominent sociologists. Some of the sociological notables were Robert K. Merton, Talcott Parsons, Kingsley Davis, and Matilda White Riley. Parson's (1963) article in this special issue, "Death in American Society: A Brief Working Paper," took issue with the axiom that American society is a death-denying culture and posited several

societal postures toward death that suggested more an effort toward handling or controlling death than denial.

Pine (1977:64) indicates that Fulton went on to offer the first course at an American University on death and dying at Minnesota in 1963. It has been reported, however, that John D. Morgan, an academic philosopher, may have been the first person to offer a course on death and dying at a Canadian university at or about the same time, if not earlier. If that is the case, Morgan then was the first to offer such a course in North America.

Other milestones in the sociology of death and dying occurred in the mid- to late 1960s. Fulton (1965) followed up his article with an edited book titled *Death and Identity*. The book was multidisciplinary in its focus, and Fulton drew on scholars from many disciplines and backgrounds. Pine (1977) describes the anthology as "a collection of some of the finest essays available at that time" (p. 64). He went on to say, "It also included the most extensive bibliography on death ever assembled."

In the same year, sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1965) published their book *Awareness of Dying*. Their work focused on the social process of dying and, in this instance, dying in the hospital. These two researchers examined the meaning of death in the hospital and the interaction between and among patients, medical staff, and family members as a social process. In 1968, Glaser and Strauss followed their first book with another, *Time for Dying* (actually the third monograph in a series of four based on their research over a period of six years). In this book, Glaser and Strauss conceptualized the notion of death as having a "trajectory of dying," by which they referred to the patient's course or pattern of dying. Their book explores how the patterns of dying temporality affect and interact with medical staff and family and the social interpretation and meaning of various trajectories of death. Another significant publication in this period was *Passing On: The Social Organization of Dying* (Sudnow 1967). This book also examines the context of institutionalized dying "and the social organization of hospital care and the dying patient" (Pine 1977:66).

In 1966, Pine first offered an interdisciplinary course titled "Death" at Dartmouth College (Pine 1977:65). Three other publications on death in the late 1960s deserve mention. Robert Blauner (1966) published an article "Death and Social Structure" in the journal *Psychiatry*. Basically, Blauner posited that death has a disruptive effect on the social enterprise in terms of social relationships. Accordingly, society shapes social structure to constrain and contain the disruptive effects of death. One example of his hypothesis would be that of society reducing the importance of those who die by devaluing the social worth of the elderly, thereby diluting or mitigating the disruptive effects of death.

Perhaps a scholarly milestone in the development of the social study of death and dying was the book *On Death and Dying* by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969), a psychiatrist. Dr. Kubler-Ross articulated five sociopsychological

stages of dying and suggested that terminally ill patients move through these stages as the terminal illness progressed. Ultimately, the patient achieves the fifth and final stage, that of *acceptance*, at which point he or she can face death with equanimity and serenity. Kubler-Ross's book and her other writings are among the most widely cited publications in the field of thanatology. Her theory of the five stages of dying is today a component of the curricula of many specialties, such as medicine, nursing, psychiatry, and several of the behavioral sciences. In speaking of Kubler-Ross, Doka (2003) observes that "her message was one that rejected dehumanizing technology, embraced a normal death, and saw opportunities for growth even at the end of life—all of which resonated well with American culture in the 1960's" (p. 51).

In 1968, Clifton Bryant founded a new journal titled *Sociological Symposium*<sup>2</sup> at Western Kentucky University. As the title of the journal implies, each issue was topical. The inaugural issue was dedicated to the topic of death. This issue, "death," attracted wide attention and was well received. In 1966, Richard Kalish and Robert Kastenbaum, two psychologists, founded and coedited a mimeographed newsletter called *Omega* (Pine 1977:6). In 1970, this newsletter was formalized into a scholarly journal titled *Omega*, which was coedited by the same two men (Doka 2003:52).

By the last years of the 1960s, the study of death and dying had been legitimated and normalized. Thanatology had come into its own. Courses in death and dying were appearing with regularity in colleges and universities across the country, and the next few years saw a surge of publications, books, and articles addressing the topic of death.

The sociology of death was now an accepted specialty area, but the growth and development of a thanatological literature in this specialty continued to be very much an interdisciplinary effort, and it was still difficult to disentangle the sociological enterprise from that of other behavioral sciences. As Doka (2003) concluded, "In summary, the 1960s provided a firm foundation for death studies to emerge as an established academic discipline with its own models, controversies, journals, and organizations" (p. 51).

The 1970s and 1980s were very productive years for thanatology in terms of research and scholarship, and the momentum of these efforts continued to increase until today in the new millennium. As part of the thanatological enterprise, the sociology of death (as part of the generic field thanatology) has also enjoyed vigorous growth, and the literature has expanded accordingly. The period from 1970 through 2006 has been productive.

In 1970, the first textbook in the field of the sociology of death was published, a sure sign that this specialty area of sociology had been legitimated, accepted, and normalized (e.g., removed from the category of esoteric). The textbook, authored by Glenn M. Vernon, was aptly titled *The Sociology of Death: An Analysis of Death-Related Behavior* (1970). The book followed the research strands that had evolved during the early years. These loosely

included the meaning and interpretation of death, the fear of death and dying, dying as a social process, the timing of death and the preservation of life, funeralization (although not under this name), bereavement, and reestablishing equilibrium in death-disrupted social systems. The text was widely used in thanatology courses, and especially those located in sociology departments. It did not go into subsequent editions. Interestingly, this was the first text to be titled *The Sociology of Death*. The study of death and dying was so multidisciplinary that such a title tended to discourage sales for those death and dying courses situated in other departments. All subsequent textbooks, with one exception years later, in the area of death and dying had more generic titles, regardless of the academic discipline of the author.

A number of other texts on thanatology have been published over the years. One of these is Edwin S. Shneidman's (1976) (edited) anthology *Death: Current Perspectives*, published and widely used as a text in death and dying courses. A particularly popular (and durable) text was Robert J. Kastenbaum's (1977) *Death, Society and Human Experience* (now in its seventh edition). Another text that came out at this time was *Understanding Death and Dying* by Sandra Galadiers Wilcox and Marilyn Sutton (1977). In 1979, Hannelore Wass published her introductory text *Dying: Facing the Facts*. It went through a number of editions. Dale V. Hardt (1979) authored *Death: The Final Frontier*, and the next year, Kathy Charmaz (1980) published *The Social Reality of Death*.

During the 1980s, a number of other texts on death and dying appeared. One of the first basic text volumes to be published in that decade was *Death, Grief, and Caring Relationships* by Richard A. Kalish (1981). It went into a second edition in 1985. Kalish (1980) had earlier published an edited anthology that examined death and dying from cross-cultural perspectives. In 1983, a particularly notable text appeared: *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying* by Lynne Ann DeSpelder and Albert Lee Strickland. This text was (and still is) very widely used in courses addressing death and dying. It has proved also to be extremely durable and is now (2006) in its seventh edition. The year 1985 seems to have been very much a "bumper year." Lewis R. Aiken's (1985) *Dying, Death, and Bereavement* was published then. So, too, was John S. Stephenson's (1985) splendid exposition, *Death, Grief, and Mourning*. Another text on death and dying published in that year was *Dying in the Life Cycle: Psychological, Biomedical, and Social Perspectives*, authored by Walter J. Smith (1985). Yet another text published in 1985 was *Understanding Dying, Death, and Bereavement* by Michael R. Leming and George E. Dickinson. This book was widely used in the classroom and also proved to be very durable. It is now in its sixth edition (2006).

In the late 1980s, several more basic thanatology texts were published. One text that appeared in 1987 was *Dying and Death: Coping, Caring, Understanding* by Judy Oakes and Gene Ezell. Among other introductory thanatology books published during this period were *Death in the*

*Midst of Life: Social and Cultural Influences on Death, Grief, and Mourning* by Jack B. Kamerman (1988) and *Endings: A Sociology of Death and Dying* by the sociologist Michael C. Kearl (1989). This is the first basic text since Vernon's book back in 1970 that had the words "sociology of death" in its title—a brave gesture by the author. Yet another text published in this area was *Dying and Grieving: Lifespan and Family Perspectives* by Alicia Skinner Cook and Kevin Ann Oltjenbruns (1989).

Since 1990, a few other introductions to death and dying have been published. The first was *Death and Dying, Life and Living* (Corr, Nabe, and Corr 1994). This text is now (2006) in its fifth edition. Some others are *Death, Mourning, and Caring* by Robert Maronne (1997) and Janet Lembke's (2003) *The Quality of Life: Living Well, Dying Well*, although the format and topics of the latter text depart somewhat from the traditional model of topics found in most introductory thanatology textbooks.

This list of introductory thanatology texts is not exhaustive. There are others, and there are also innumerable edited anthologies that have been used in thanatology courses.

Of the array of books cited, some are authored by psychologists, some by sociologists, some by gerontologists, and some by individuals from other disciplines, both behavioral sciences and the humanities. Most, if not all, of the texts, however, have been (at one time or other) adopted by sociologists for use in their introductory sociology of death courses, and the same is true for psychologists and for thanatologists from other disciplines.

The basic texts over the last 36 years (from 1970 when the first text appeared) represent the history and development of the study (including the sociological study) of death and dying. Their respective perspectives, list of topics covered, and orientation show the changes in thanatological pedagogy. The reader is invited to review this progression of texts over the years, to obtain better insight into the recent history of thanatology, including the component sociology of death strands.

In examining these texts over the years, it is interesting to note that the coverage of these books, in terms of topics addressed, has hardly changed over the last one-third of a century. It would appear that there has been a common pool of topics shared by all the disciplines in the area of death education, and the authors of the books simply develop their texts using some, but not all, of the topics. Each book has a unique mix of topics and coverage, and this different mix is what makes each text distinctive. A number of books employ a mix of topics relatively similar to others. Some give more emphasis to some of the topics than others do.

This difference in coverage results in two distinctive categories in terms of orientation. Some of the texts devote more coverage and emphasis to topics that focus on interpersonal interaction, emotions, and the subjective aspects of deaths. The emphasis here is on topics such as the fear of death; the social process of dying; the interaction

between and among terminal patients, family members, and medical personnel; and grief, mourning, and bereavement. This category of basic texts essentially looks at subjective death-related matters. It also has more of an applied orientation in the sense of seeking to prepare individuals in the health or helping vocations, such as nurses, social workers, or those in counseling. This type of book is more frequently authored by psychologists, gerontologists, persons in the health or medical fields, or those who are involved in spiritual matters, such as ministers, philosophers, or theologians. The Corr text, for example, has such authorship. These texts have a sociopsychological or sociomedical perspective. Such books can be termed *clinical* in orientation.

The other category of texts is socio-anthropological in orientation. These texts focus more on objective concerns such as funerals, body disposition, death rates, causes of death, the etiology of death, an objective review of escatologies, and related topics such as near-death experiences, suicide rates and causes, and the legalities of death. This category of basic text is more detached and descriptive than applied and can be termed *informative* in orientation. This type of book is more likely to be authored by a sociologist.

Inasmuch as basic courses in death and dying tend to be multidisciplinary and are offered in departments of various disciplines, the market tends to be generic and the publishers and authors strive to include multiple perspectives and orientations and appeal to all disciplines represented in thanatology and death studies.

It is instructive to note that while the newer textbooks are more replete with photos, charts, diagrams, and "boxes," when their table of contents is compared with that of the Vernon text (the first textbook published in 1970), the topics listed are essentially the same, albeit in somewhat different sequence. Some of the newer texts have added a topic or so since the Vernon text—a chapter on the legalities of death or discussions of near-death experiences, war, and terrorism. Other than these topics, they are essentially "old wine in new bottles." The most notable difference in the newer texts is that the chapter discussions are based on a far more extensive literature and tend to cite more publications and research.

The fact remains, however, that it is difficult to distinguish sociological writings or perspectives from a number of other disciplines with a thanatological interest. There is not as much a sociology of death and dying as there is a significant sociological contribution to the literature of thanatology, or death and dying studies, if you will. It would appear that the basic parameters of thanatology have been established and only the gaps need to be filled and the nuances explored.

## The Popularity of Death Studies

As mentioned earlier, there were only a few scattered course offerings in death and dying in the early and



mid-1960s—most conspicuously, Fulton's course, first offered in 1963, and Pine's course, first offered in 1966. By the late 1960s, however, courses in death and dying began to appear in colleges and universities across the nation, offered by psychologists, sociologists, and others in both the social sciences and the humanities. The topic of death education itself developed quite a following, attracting both academics and individuals in the health and counseling fields, and this generated greater demand for college courses in death and dying. Centers for death education were also being established. To mention one early center, Robert Kastenbaum, a psychologist, organized and directed the Center for Psychological Studies of Dying, Death, and Lethal Behavior at Wayne State University in April 1969 (Pine 1977:68). Another early center, the Center for Death Education and Research, was established by Robert Fulton, a sociologist, at the University of Minnesota in July 1969 (Pine 1977:68). After Fulton retired, the center was moved to the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, and Robert Bendiksen became its director (Doka 2003:52). According to Doka (2003:52), two researchers (Green and Irish 1971) found that there were more than 600 courses on death and dying by 1971. Doka (2003:52) also reported that one researcher (Cummins 1978) indicated that five years later, there were more than 1,000 death and dying courses in the United States, with the total enrollment exceeding 30,000 students. The number of such courses today is, undoubtedly, much increased, as is the total enrollment.

As collegiate interest in death and dying increased and spread, many teaching resources, such as films, filmstrips, videotapes, cassettes, were produced (Pine 1977:71–72). The availability of such material was likely one of the factors in the increase in death and dying courses. Instructors with an interest in, but little formal preparation for, the subject of death and dying could more easily develop and teach courses on these topics. The availability of such teaching aids and instructional material was probably a factor in the introduction of death and dying units or segments in both elementary and secondary schools (Pine 1977:72).

A multidisciplinary professional organization called the Forum for Death Education was organized and inaugurated in 1976. The name of the organization was later changed to the Association for Death Education and Counseling (Doka 2003:52). This organization, since its founding, has had a position of centrality in the growth and development of death education and the death awareness movement. *The Journal of Thanatology* was founded in 1971 but did not continue beyond 1977. In 1977, Hannelore Wass founded and edited a new journal, *Death Education*. The name was later changed to a more generic title, *Death Studies*. This journal and the earlier journal *Omega*, first published in 1970, subsequently came to be regarded as official journals of the Association for Death Education and Counseling (Doka 2003:52). In 1977, another journal in the field of death and dying, but perhaps peripheral to the mainstream, was founded. This journal was *Markers*,

founded in 1980 and published by the Association for Gravestone Studies. The *Journal of Near Death Studies* was founded in the spring of 1988.

Two more journals, the American journal *Loss, Grief, and Care*, later titled *Journal of Social Work in End of Life & Palliative Care*, and the British journal *Mortality*, which first appeared in 1996, have become additional publishing venues for thanatologists, and both feature articles of broad interest and high scholarly quality.

During the years when the basic texts on death and dying were being published in sporadic profusion, there were many anthologies (some edited by sociologists and others by scholars from a number of disciplines) also being published. Most of them did not appear in second or subsequent editions. During this period there were also a number of seminal monographs published that were incorporated into the corpus of thanatological knowledge shared by sociology and numerous other disciplines. Curiously, one of the earlier and more important monographs on death was Warner's (1959) *The Living and the Dead*. The curious aspect of the book and its findings is that it grew out of a community study and was not generally intended (or recognized) as a contribution to the sociology of death. One part of the book examines certain aspects of community symbolism and community attitudes regarding death and the dead and local cemeteries. Another notable example was *Death, Grief, and Mourning* by Geoffrey Gorer (1965), a British social anthropologist. In 1968, Paul Irion published his comprehensive history of cremation, aptly titled *Cremation*. Another very influential book was *The Denial of Death* by Ernest Becker (1973), an American cultural anthropologist. Two very useful and often cited historical monographs are *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* by David E. Stannard (1977), an American historian, and *Death in Early America* by Margaret Coffin (1976), an antiques expert. Other useful monographs include Paul E. Irion's (1954) *The Funeral and the Mourners* and, later, *The Funeral: Vestige or Value* (1966). A particularly widely cited anthropological work is *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* by Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf (1979).

In terms of definitive scholarship, a towering, if not monumental, monograph in the historical study of death and dying is *The Hour of Our Death* by Philippe Aries (1981), a French social historian. Aries's thesis is that in the distant past, death was "tamed" (viewed as inevitable and normal, accepted with equanimity, and assimilated by society). Over the centuries, this view changed, so that by modern times, death was feared, denied, hidden, "medicalized," "dirty," and "excluded." A very useful and wonderfully detailed monograph is *Purified by Fire*, a social history of cremation in the United States, authored by Stephen Prothero (2001), assistant professor of Religion at Boston University.

Some of the monographs on death have addressed death in other cultures. A particularly relevant and interesting

example of such a monograph is *Price of Death: The Funeral Industry in Japan* by Hikaru Suzuki (2001).

Recent years have seen the publication of a number of comprehensive reference works—handbooks and encyclopedias—addressing various aspects of death and dying, authored or edited by sociologists and scholars from various disciplines that incorporate thanatology into their research and scholarship.

A limited set of examples here might include the *Encyclopedia of Death*, edited by Robert Kastenbaum, a gerontologist, and Beatrice Kastenbaum (1989), a nurse in academia. This book was one of the earlier works of this genre. It is still in print (1993), although by a different publisher. Other subsequent reference works were the *Encyclopedia of Afterlife Beliefs and Phenomena* by James R. Lewis (1995), professor of Religious Studies, and a later edition, *The Death and Afterlife Book: The Encyclopedia of Death, Near Death, and Life after Death* (2001).

Other recent reference works on some aspects of death are *Death and the Afterlife: A Cultural Encyclopedia* by Richard P. Taylor (2000), professor of Religious Studies, and the *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*, edited by Glenny Howarth, a sociologist, and Oliver Leaman (2001), a philosopher. One recent, lengthy and relatively definitive reference work is the *Handbook of Death and Dying*, edited by Clifton D. Bryant (2003), a sociologist. Another definitive reference work also appeared in 2003, this time an encyclopedia: Robert Kastenbaum's (a psychologist) *Macmillan's Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*.

The most recent reference books include Cassell, Salinas, and Winn's (2005) *The Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*. Two of the three authors are medical doctors. The other most recent reference book addresses a somewhat different aspect of death—cremation: the *Encyclopedia of Cremation* (2005), edited by Douglas J. Davies, professor of Religious Studies and Theology.

It is interesting to note that these various reference works, speaking of some aspect of death, dying, and the afterlife, were authored or edited by scholars from a number of different academic disciplines and are, no doubt, used by academicians in a number of different disciplines, including sociologists. All these books were significant contributions to the corpus of knowledge in thanatology and, by extension, sociology. The sociology of death and dying is simply too intertwined with other disciplines to be easily examined outside of the mainstream of thanatology.

Of course, death-related articles appeared in many other more general journals. Many such articles look at relatively new areas of death and dying that have not been addressed in the thanatological texts. One illustrative example of articles on new topics is Vinitzky-Seroussi and Ben-Ari's (2000) "A Knock on the Door": Managing Death in the Israeli Defense Forces," which appeared in the journal *The Sociological Quarterly*. Another example is Ben-Ari's (2005) "Epilogue: A 'Good' Military Death," which appeared in *Armed Forces and Society*.

The various thanatological journals today carry articles that focus on many of the same topics as in their early years. The basic parameters of thanatology appear to have changed little since the time they were first published; however, the articles today often tend to be more sophisticated, imaginative, esoteric, and, in some instances, colorful. Two examples from the journal *Omega* may serve to illustrate this trend: Cox, Garrett, and Graham's (2004–2005) "Death in Disney Films: Implications for Children's Understanding of Death" and Goodrum's (2005) "The Interaction between Thoughts and Emotions Following the News of a Loved One's Murder."

Another example of the "new" genre of more untraditional topics is Breen's (2004) article "The Dead and the Living in the Land of Peace: A Sociology of the Yasukuni Shrine," which appeared in the journal *Mortality*.

The journal articles that address death, dying, and death-related behavior are too numerous to enumerate or discuss. It suffices to say that today, the body of thanatological literature is quite robust and there is a substantial body of knowledge in this field on which to build in the future.

The research undertaken by thanatologists, including sociologists, has by and large been atheoretical. Or, conversely, it might be said that such theories that have driven research in the area of death and dying have been theories "of the middle range." Thanatological research has included efforts such as demographic analyses of death rates, life expectancy, and disease etiology; attitudinal studies of death anxiety and preferences in funeral styles, body disposition, and euthanasia; ethnographic analyses of funeral behavior; the history and ecology of cemeteries; interactional analyses of medical staff/patient behavior; dramaturgical analyses of funeral and funeral home behavior; historical analyses of changes in eschatology, funeral format, and body disposition; participant observation studies of executions, funeral behavior, dying behavior, and the behavior of medical staff toward terminally ill patients; and cross-cultural studies of death-related behavior, such as funeral and body disposition, to mention but some thanatological research strategies.

Perhaps some of the most productive, and theoretically fruitful, research on death and dying has been the development of conceptual paradigms and analytical typologies regarding death-related behavior. Examples are Kubler-Ross's (1969) stages of dying; Salamone's (1972) ideal-type bifurcation of funeral homes into "local" and "mass" mortuaries; Stephenson's (1985) historical evolution of eschatology, funerals, and body disposition and his resultant "Eras of Death"; and Worden's (1982) four tasks of mourning, to cite a few.

Given the extensive body of research literature that has been developed and the very insightful conceptual schemes and analytical typologies that have emerged from this literature, there is little doubt that thanatological research, including the contributions of the sociology of death and dying, will become more and more theoretical with time.

## The Future

Few specialty areas in sociology have broader or richer vistas of research opportunities in the future than the sociology of death and dying (or the more generic thanatology). The very nature and context of death, in terms of the frequency and modes of death, the meaning and fear of death, the dynamics of dying, the funeralization process, body disposition, the experience of grief and mourning, memorialization, and suicide and euthanasia, to mention but a few, are now undergoing, and will continue to undergo, profound transformations. These changes will have very significant import for many areas of our social lives and, indeed, will affect the total collective order. The scholars of the sociology of death and dying will have very full research agendas in the future.

## THE AGING OF AMERICA

During the twentieth century, the percentage of elderly persons (aged 65 or older) has increased very dramatically. As Bryant (2003) describes the process,

At the turn of the 20th century (1900) only about 4.1% of our population was aged 65 or older—about 1 person out of every 20. By 1940, the percentage rose to 6.8%, and by 1960, 9.2% of the population was 65 or older. That figure increased to 12.3% by 2000 (*World Almanac* 2002:3385). (P. 1030)

We have an aging population, and the trend will continue throughout the twenty-first century. By 2010, the percentage of those 65 and older will rise to 13.2, and 18.5 percent of the population will be 65 or older by 2025. This figure will further rise to 20.3 percent in 2050. Thus, one person of every five will be elderly (Bryant 2003:1030). It has been projected that by 2100, one of every four persons will be 65 or older (*World Almanac* 2002:3385). Such demographic changes will “reshape our culture during the 21st century and will have enormous implications for death-related activities” (Bryant 2003:1030). The research opportunities attendant on these demographic trends will be extensive and inviting.

As opposed to a century ago, when the young (especially infants and children) died in both greater numbers and greater percentages than other segments of the population, in the twenty-first century, the elderly will die in dramatically larger numbers and percentages. For the past 45 years or so, the death rate in the United States has remained relatively stable at a range of about 8.5–9.5 deaths per 1,000 population. The death rate in the United States will begin to increase by 2030, and by 2060, the death rate will stand at 13.17 percent, some 52 percent higher than in 2001. Taking into account the natural increase in population and the projected increase in the death rate, the actual number of deaths in the United States will be 6,500,000 in 2080 as opposed to 1,711,982 in 1960, almost four times as large. As Bryant (2003) suggests,

“In effect, death will be a growth industry in the United States for much of the 21st century” (p. 1030). Again, the growth of the death industry will offer some very attractive research possibilities.

The demographic changes will have dramatic effects on our society. One effect is that more medical facilities and facilities for the care of the elderly, such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities, will have to be built in large numbers and on an ongoing basis to meet the increasing demand. Such facilities will, in turn, require increasingly large numbers of staff members, such as nurses, practical nurses, orderlies, cooks, and cleanup personnel, to mention but a few vocations that will come to be in very short supply. The need for staff will generate other problems in a chain reaction fashion and will be rife with research opportunities, and sociologists in the field of death and dying will have very full research agendas exploring the social impact of these demographic trends.

The elderly are, in effect, dying, both metaphorically and medically. In centuries past, most individuals died of acute illnesses, such as typhoid, diphtheria, or cholera, and died promptly, while today the causes of death are likely to be chronic illnesses such as cardiac problems or cancer. With chronic diseases, an individual may well live for years beyond the diagnosis. Thus, in effect, those individuals with terminal conditions, primarily the elderly, make up a subpopulation of considerable size, and this group can be aggregated with those who die, for purposes of better understanding the social dimensions of death in our society. The increase in the rates and number of natural deaths will be augmented by the possibility of mass unnatural deaths caused by massive terrorist attacks and epidemics, if not pandemics of deathly diseases, such as avian flu, Spanish flu, Ebola, AIDS, and other yet unnoted diseases. The sociological significance of such megadeaths is obvious.

Inasmuch as individuals can often live for many months, and even years, after the diagnosis of terminal illness, and this medical accomplishment will, no doubt, dramatically improve in the future, the number of persons so diagnosed will expand significantly. There will be millions of persons who are classified as terminal. At this point, dying will take on much greater social and even political importance. With additional medical breakthroughs in chemotherapy and other additional technological advances, death can be more easily “postponed” temporarily, and the process of dying can be prolonged. In short, people can be aided to die slowly instead of dropping dead (as with a massive heart attack) or dying quickly. More persons will be dying slowly, and more attention will be given to dying. There will be a need for more specialized facilities, such as hospices, and more concern addressing the quality of life while dying. There will be efforts to “ease” patients into death using psychedelic and hallucinogenic drugs, hypnosis, and so on. Dying will assume more of a social status dimension such as with the elderly or persons who are disabled, and the dying as a group may

become something of a political entity in the sense of being a voting block with special demands and needs, which they will attempt to see implemented, much in the fashion of the efforts of organizations such as the American Association of Retired Persons. This aggregation of dying people who will come to identify themselves with others in similar straits will be a social entity to be reckoned with, and they will undoubtedly come to have a significant influence on social policy. Such an aggregated group will likely influence the agendas of both state legislatures and the U.S. Congress. Even a political party made up of the dying is not beyond the realm of possibility. Sociologists in this field can and will likely conduct research on the growing political influence of the dying and how they will wield their political clout in the distribution of economic and social resources.

In the twenty-first century, death and dying will be more visible, more omnipresent, more seminal topics of social concern, and a much more pressing economic reality. All this will have an impact on our culture and our social lives. Old age must be considered a component topic of death and dying inasmuch as old age is the final phase of life and many elderly persons are, indeed, dying. Already, we are seeing death, dying, and elderly products and services being advertised on television. These products include adult diapers for incontinent elderly persons, food supplements for the elderly whose appetites have diminished and who need additional nutrition, and burial insurance. Also being advertised are medications for persons who are undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatment for cancer. Such medications are intended (and needed) to mitigate the side effects of such treatment. Funeral homes and cemeteries are also beginning to advertise on television as well as in newspapers. Such trends in death-related advertising will dramatically expand to include many more avenues of advertising and a much broader array of products and services. Sociologists in the area of death and dying will turn their attention to the study of greater death orientation in the mass media, such as the study of consumer behavior, and how this, in turn, will shape the direction of our cultural evolution.

Students of American culture should find fertile opportunities for research in examining the impact of the increasing rate and number of deaths on our culture. Culture determines the way in which we think and feel and confront death. Death, in turn, has an impact on and changes culture. In the nineteenth century, the cultural posture toward death was one of acceptance and integration. During the first half of the twentieth century, ours was a death denial culture, which succeeded in hiding, avoiding, and ignoring death. During the second half of the twentieth century, the death awareness movement again refocused our attention on death. In the twenty-first century, we are going to be inundated with death issues to the point of cultural overload. Research interest in the cultural accommodation of this death overload and in the dynamics of personal confrontation with and the transcending of

death will provide rich and pressing opportunities for sociological research on the changing attitudinal and value postures of Americans toward death and dying.

Already, our language is beginning to reflect the increased awareness of death in the form of an expanded vocabulary of death-related words, such as oncology, metastasis, columbarium, clinical death, near-death experiences, postself, postself career, memorialization, self-deliverance, viatical settlements, memory picture of the dead, physician-assisted suicide, postvention (providing emotional support for suicide survivors), lethal injection (as in executions), advance directives, trajectory of dying, aftercare (assisting the bereaved), harvesting body parts, virtual cemeteries, sudden infant death syndrome, cryonics, cyber funerals, death denial, AIDS, and megadeath, to name but a few. These are no longer technical words and phrases. Some come from medicine, some from law, some from the funeral industry, and some from thanatology. They are now part of common discourse, for example, social conversation, newspaper articles, and television programming. This was not the case 50 years ago. Now they are a component of everyday conversation. With time, our death-related vocabulary will expand at an exponential rate. The expansion of death-related vocabulary may represent an indicator of the degree of our preoccupation with death and our orientation toward death. Researchers will likely come to demonstrate a much-enhanced interest in death linguistics, and even a scientific journal in this area may likely emerge. Language reflects culture, and sociological researchers will likely examine changes in culture as reflected by language. The increasing use of death-related words and phrases in our language may well have import for our general orientation toward death itself, and this invites sociological exploration.

Other areas of change in death-related behavior in the future will likely encourage sociological research. One such area is the changing social dynamics in funeralization. In this regard, funeral homes themselves are changing and will continue to change. Some years ago, Salomone (1972) provided a sociological analysis of the historical metamorphosis of the American funeral home from what he termed the *local mortuary*, which was essentially a "Mom and Pop" business enterprise with emphasis on personal service and observance of local customs, to the more contemporary *mass mortuary*. These mortuaries, with larger and more elaborate bureaucratic staffing, are more likely to offer less personalized and more standardized type of funeralization. Some of these mortuaries are part of a larger chain enterprise. The trends in the future will include almost all funeral homes being large-scale, corporate-owned chain businesses. Funeral homes in the future will be more and more aggregated into corporate chains and conglomerates. Such chains will increasingly be owned by a few national corporations, who will also acquire related businesses, such as casket-manufacturing companies, cemeteries, crematoria, and hearse-manufacturing firms, to name but a few. Many funeral homes in large cities already have satellite facilities

in the suburbs to make visitations and funerals more convenient for those living in the areas just outside the city proper. Bodies are being embalmed in the central facility and delivered to the satellite locations, thus saving the cost of an embalmer in all but the central facilities. This particular trend has gone even further. In some localities, there are embalming firms with a staff of salaried embalmers who are not connected to any funeral home. Such firms operate as a kind of embalming “wholesaler,” doing contract embalming for a number of different funeral homes. The funeral homes will pick up the dead body from the hospital, hospice, home, or morgue and deliver it to the embalming firm. The firm will embalm and otherwise prepare the body for a set fee. The body will then be picked up by funeral home employees and brought back to the funeral home for visitation, viewing, and the funeral. Where such wholesale embalming firms exist, the local funeral homes do not have to have an embalmer on the staff, thereby saving the cost of the embalmer’s salary and fringe benefits. The contract fees for embalming bodies are much lower than salary and fringe benefits. Other cost-cutting trends, including practices such as renting a hearse for a funeral, rather than owning one, are already taking place and will continue and proliferate in the future. Again, research opportunities will abound.

Funerals themselves are changing and will continue to change and evolve in the future: for instance, practices such as having funeral services that are less formal, more secular, and briefer and more perfunctory—more “packaged” as it were—in the interest of the busy schedules of those who attend. Even now, some funeral homes are using “drive-through” windows to display the body of the deceased as a means of expediting visitation and viewing and to save time for the visitors. Still other time-saving devices may be adapted and routinized. Increasingly, eulogies (and even sermons) will be delivered by friends or relatives of the deceased. There will be a greater emphasis on more “practical” and more economical funerals. Toward this end, there will be discount funeral homes and do-it-yourself efforts, such as purchasing caskets through discount sources. Technology, such as computers and television, will alter funeralization activities, and new practices, such as virtual attendance at funerals via computer viewing and viewing funerals on videotape sent to relatives who could not attend, will emerge.

In the future, death-related behavior will be dramatically changed, and sociology, as well as other disciplines with a thanatological curiosity will experience unlimited opportunities for documenting and exploring these changes.

## PART IV

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# THE SOCIOLOGY OF NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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The sociology of consumer behavior is now enjoying a renaissance of interest. In an earlier period of American sociology, particularly in the years immediately before and after World War II, consumer behavior was pretty much ignored. While consumers were mentioned in early community studies (Lynd and Lynd 1937; Warner and Lunt 1941), few articles on consumer behavior appeared in professional journals. Classical theorists were certainly not at fault; they left a rich heritage of sociological theory: Simmel ([1904] 1957) writing on fashion, Marx ([1867] 1990) on commodity fetishism, Weber ([1922] 1959) on status groups, Veblen ([1899] 1953) on conspicuous consumption. Handbooks published up through the 1980s continued to discuss traditional sociological concerns related to politics, deviant behavior, and race relations (Merton, Broom, and Cottrell 1959; Faris 1964; Smelser 1988). But consumer behavior was not mentioned at all.

It is anybody's guess why consumers were ignored by sociologists for so long. Possibly, consumer behavior was considered to be the province of other academic domains—economics, for example, or retailing and marketing. Marxists and neo-Marxists saw societies organized around production, with consumption a distraction from the paramount concerns of capitalism (Horkheimer and Adorno 1972). Others have speculated that production has been the perennial winner in the sociological agenda. Possibly too sociologists thought that consumption was frivolous. Mills (1953) commented that Veblen's satirical attack on the new middle class actually blurred his understanding of conspicuous consumption.

During the last few decades, many observers became increasingly convinced that societies were changing in their orientation from production to consumption (McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb 1982; Campbell 1987). Two other factors, however, played a more immediate role in precipitating this area's growth. The first is the "cultural turn" in sociology: the realization of culture's fundamental role in understanding society (Alexander 1990). Consumer goods are, after all, cultural artifacts. Not surprisingly, anthropologists introduced much of the early research and many of the seminal works in this area (Richardson and Kroeber 1940; Sahlins 1976; Mintz 1985; McCracken 1988). Key here is the joint publication of an anthropologist and economist: Douglas and Isherwood's (1979) *World of Goods*, a scathing critique of the utilitarian approach to consumption. A second reason relates to the resurgence of interest in symbolic interaction. This perspective was a natural point of entrée for understanding consumption and the symbolic characteristics of commodities. Research by Blumer (1969) on fashion, Stone (1962) on apparel, and Goffman (1951, 1959) on prop management and the symbolic properties of products reflected an early concern with the role of material goods in social life.

The sociology of consumer behavior is a comparatively new area of research. The flood of recent research is testimony to a new and vibrant stream of scholarly activity—much of it at the intersection of culture and the economy. The area addresses the entire range of issues related to consumer behavior: Why are there so many commodities? Who uses them? How are they made and where are they

bought? As in many new areas of academic interest, research journals are not crowded with numerous, competing paradigms. Emphasis instead is on exploring the role of consumer behavior in all aspects of social life. To organize this review, I use the central paradigm that has emerged over the last decade—the model of a *consumer society*. Consumer societies are defined as societies where identity problems are resolved through commodities obtained from the marketplace. The hallmark of this paradigm is an emphasis on the interdependency between various parts of the market and between markets and consumers.

This review is organized into three sections: the first considers how commodities are used as resources in identity formation and incorporated into the social and cultural lives of individuals; the second and third sections explore the market's role in producing and distributing goods. Research reviews are testimony to an academic area's coming of age; several have recently been published on consumption and interested readers can consult them for a slightly different overview of this field (Frenzen, Hirsch, and Zerillo 1994; Zukin and Maguire 2004; Arnould and Thompson 2005; Zelizer 2005).

## GOODS IN THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORLD

More than a century ago, Veblen ([1899] 1953) outlined the fundamental ideas for understanding consumption: consumption is *social* (it is influenced by others) and *cultural* (it is information conveyed to others). Contemporary scholars have taken the social and cultural aspects of consumption and set them against a backdrop of a changing society, which has altered the traditional bases of identity. Rapid and deep-seated social change, according to Giddens (1991), results in a “reflexive project” where individuals continually construct self-narratives, autobiographies of sorts, to anchor themselves in a new world. This new world involves not only rapid industrialization, postindustrialization, and urbanization but also globalization. Globalization, according to Frank and Meyer (2002:93), diminishes the sovereignty of the nation-state and legitimates the “tastes, interests, and needs” of individuals. Consumer habits are critical to these needs and critical to identity. Commodities help locate the self in social and cultural space. The market supplies the cultural resources—the commodities essential to this process. At the same time, consumer goods are no panacea for the risks and uncertainties of the modern world. In contrast with older and more stable social orders, an uneasy tension exists between the construction of individualized identities and the market's supply of commodities. This tension—that the fit between identity and commodity is never exact or completely right—is part of the meaning conveyed by Giddens's (1991) “reflexive project.”

## Cultural Distinctions: Product Use and Personal Identity

In premodern societies, “appearance was largely standardized in terms of traditional criteria” (Giddens 1991:99). But classification takes place differently today, with identities more individualized and roles increasingly diverse; multiple roles intersect breeding conflict and ambiguity in answering the question “who am I” (Frank and Meyer 2002; Callero 2003). This thread—that identity issues are more complicated than in the past—is found throughout the basic research on status and commodity use. Young persons are concerned not only with being on the right side of the generational divide but also with the approval of their peers (Miles 1996; Freitas et al. 1997). Women at work are anxious about balancing their femininity with the professional demands on the job (Rubinstein 1995; Kimle and Damhorst 1997). Middle-class blacks are concerned about race and troubled about distancing themselves from the negative image of an impoverished minority (Lamont and Molnar 2001). In each case, consumer goods or lifestyles related to consumption provide ammunition in the contemporary struggle with identity. Commodities are liaisons to diverse cultural categories, but particularly to age, gender, and race. Young men wind up buying the right athletic shoes, even though they are otherwise not quite useful for them (Miles 1996). Women cultivate a style of business dress to bridge the tension between fashion, conservatism, and sexuality (Kimle and Damhorst 1997). Affluent blacks conspicuously consume, a script suggested by advertising interests (Lamont and Molnar 2001). In each case, commodities clarify ambiguities in personal and social identity, that is, in the way people see themselves and in turn the way they hope they are seen by others.

Identity is a project. Detailed ethnographies indicate that problems associated with identity heighten anxiety (Thompson and Hirshman 1995; Freitas et al. 1997). Furthermore, personal change common in contemporary societies involves role transitions that escalate identity problems and alters consumption. Research indicates that individuals use different commodities as they move from one role to another—moving to college (Silver 1996), for example, or getting divorced (McAlexander 1991). New commodities help the transition; they allow anticipatory socialization to explore new roles. Cook and Kaiser (2004), for example, show how cosmetics and related products are used by young girls to explore conceptions of womanhood. Arvidsson's (2001) research discusses the role of motor scooters in the quest for self-realization among Italian youth. Commodities not only satisfy stable desires but also provide for the exploration of new roles and new identities (Solomon 1983).

Straightforward as this research may be, it is a decided theoretical advance over previous views. In contrast to economists, the emphasis is on use rather than purchase. In



contrast to neo-Marxists, the emphasis is on the value of commodities for individuals rather than capitalists. Most important, it also advances the way contemporary sociologists view how products are used. Consider, for example, Goffman's (1959) imagery: people are on stage, handle life situationally and manage whatever props are at their disposal to effect their presentation of self. On stage, props are used; off stage, they may be abandoned. In much sociological research on consumerism, however, the division between on stage and off stage is unclear. Sometimes, commodities can be easily discarded, as when teenagers experiment with cosmetics (Cook and Kaiser 2004). In other instances, commodities are not just props in a staged play, they are personal investments that are extensions of our self (Belk 1988). Much research argues that commodities play an important role in our life and may be imbued with a sacred status. Mementoes and family pictures are valued well beyond their market worth. Cars are washed, polished, and prominently displayed. Perfumes or jewelry are thought to exert power over others. If these possessions are part of any drama, they are the drama of our lives—but certainly not always or necessarily props to be discarded with ease (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988; Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry 1989; Kaiser, Freeman, and Chandler 1993; Otnes and Lowrey 1993).

### Collective Life

Beyond their relevance for personal identity, commodities integrate individuals into collective life. In the tradition of Durkheimian sociology, commodities reflect both distance and cohesion, separating “we” from “they.”

This is documented in the extensive literature on gift giving that updates the classic work on gifts and exchange (Mauss 1954; Gouldner 1960; Titmuss 1971; Cheal 1988; Otnes and Beltrami 1996). Gifts are exchanged according to prescribed rituals. In Caplow's (1984) Middletown research, gift giving at Christmas is first and foremost a public occasion. Gifts are synchronized to suit the role relationships between givers and receivers. Gifts identify the intimate circle of family and friends, but they can also be used to identify everyone else. This is possible because the social distance implied by gifts is more nuanced than the sharp binary distinction between “we” and “they.” In Middletown, intimacy is measured by the metric of the market economy: the more costly the gift, the more intimate the relationship. In this view, the variable cost of gifts distinguishes not only kin from nonkin but also everyone in between.

There is also much research on the proliferation of subcultures—testimony to the role differentiation of contemporary society. Here again, products clarify ambiguities, mark boundaries, and anchor persons into the diversity of social life. They provide the cultural capital necessary for entrée into the intimate circle that subcultures afford (Lamont and Lareau 1988). Scholars have written extensively

about various subcultures: gays (Higgins 1998), health food faddists (Thompson and Troester 2002), participants in farmers' markets (McGrath, Sherry, and Heisley 1993), and devotees of Macintosh computers or Saab automobiles (Müniz and O'Guinn 2000).

Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) research on bikers illustrates much of what this research is about. These authors use the concept of a *subculture of consumption*: “a distinctive subgroup of society that self-selects on the basis of a shared commitment to a particular product class, brand, or consumption activity” (Schouten and McAlexander 1995:43). They introduce this concept to illustrate how bikers use their Harley-Davidsons to express countercultural lifestyles. What is interesting about these bikers is not only the centrality of the bikes in their lives but also the way bikes become the medium for social interaction. The relationships among bikers depend on the bike; it is as if material objects displace individuals as partners in interaction—a process Knorr Cetina (1997) refers to as “objectualization.”

### The Language of Commodities

Commodities, as formerly noted, are cultural artifacts critical in the presentation of self. Commodities communicate cultural meaning to others, signifying who you are and what you are about. In Sahlins's (1976) view, consumer goods reproduce “the culture into a system of objects” (p. 179). But there is no simple equivalence between the particular commodities used and the way they are understood by others. This is not surprising. Designers, advertisers, and consumers give commodities different meanings. Few social scientists believe any symbolic codes are universally understood. Goffman's (1971) concept of a tie-sign suggests an alternate way to think about this problem. Commodities, in his view, vary in agreed upon meanings; there is more agreement on some commodities than others (see also Rubinstein 1995: 191–205). Tie-signs are easily read and their meanings widely understood. Obvious examples are uniforms, highly gendered clothing, or extreme countercultural expressions—as in the clothing of punks or the hoods of the Ku Klux Klan. In other instances, however, meaning is simply more ambiguous.

One apparent factor contributing to ambiguity in meaning is that persons may use similar objects for different purposes—as Bourdieu (1984:177–200) suggests for attitudes toward meals or as Halle (1992) suggests for the evaluation of art (see also Hebdige 1979). Different meanings are largely a function of individuals occupying different roles in diverse social groups. The disparity between the use of a particular commodity and its interpretation by others has been widely recognized by consumer theorists. Davis (1992) suggests that commodities are polysemic, part of an unstable language of meaning. Campbell (1996) recommends sharply distinguishing objects from use,

arguing that the two should not be confused as equivalents. Holt (1998) argues for a more holistic approach to consumption, analyzing constellations of consumer behavior rather than focusing on any given product. Symbolic interactionists conclude that ambiguous communication is inherent in social interaction; only interpersonal discourse allows individuals to attain mutual understanding (Stone 1962).

The disparity in understanding also poses problems for actors. In Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) research, not everyone who rode a bike was considered by Hell's Angels types to be part of the hard core; many were weekend bikers, frequently executives—but decidedly neither carefree nor countercultural. Needless to add, weekend bikers were objects of disdain, ridiculed by hard core cyclists. But ridicule is the cost of dependence on products that the market supplies. Access to the market is unregulated. Anyone with the resources and inclination can buy almost anything they want—even if what they want is a badge of membership in a subculture where they are unwelcome. Commodities consequently provide a rough guide to classify individuals, but precise inferences are more problematic.

### Social Class and Cultural Distinctions

Pierre Bourdieu (1984), in his influential book on *Distinction*, suggests that commodities in contemporary society provide the cultural capital to sustain class rank. He believes that incorporated into the microlevel environment of individuals—the *habitus*—are social dispositions relating what is vulgar, what is distinctive, and what provides honor and esteem. These mental sets are, in Bourdieu's view, class based. In the nineteenth-century class was a major determinant of lifestyles, as both Simmel ([1904] 1957) and Veblen ([1899] 1953) observed. Scholars however have questioned the connection between class and consumer behavior in contemporary societies. They question whether status has replaced class and whether lifestyles are anchored in economic hierarchies.

The role of class in consumption continues to be debated (Lamont and Fournier 1992; Lamont et al. 1996; Kingston 2000; Grusky and Weeden 2001). In one sense, class is undeniably influential in consumption: income cannot be ignored and education, particularly as it relates to literacy, likewise may be relevant (Wallendorf 2001). There is a further question, however: Do classes resemble status groups with similar lifestyles and consumer habits? Holt (1998) argues that they do; using a broad definition of consumption, he finds that upper classes more likely value aesthetics than function and authentic commodities than mass-produced commodities. Others suggest, however, that class today no longer distinguishes lifestyles. Halle's (1992) research on art in middle-and working-class homes shows few significant differences. Turner and Edmund (2002) indicate that Australian elites were not terribly

interested in highbrow culture. Lamont's (1992) research suggests that Bourdieu's observations on class distinction may more accurately describe France than the United States. How should one interpret conflicting findings on class? Two conclusions, I believe, are warranted. First, class and consumption require more refined analysis to disentangle important nuances in consumption (Crompton 1996; Holt 1998; Grusky and Weeden 2001). Second, it is likely that class remains influential, although its importance probably has diminished in more recent times.

An additional theoretical issue is whether Veblen's observations on conspicuous consumption remain valid today. This is a frequent topic in social commentary. In her book *Do Americans Shop Too Much?*, Juliet Schor (2000) reargues Veblen's critique by noting that "the lifestyles of the upper middle class and the rich have become a more salient point of reference for people throughout the income distribution. . . . Luxury, rather than mere comfort, is a widespread aspiration" (p. 8). Luxury products are indeed available—and may be more widely distributed than they were in the past (Twitchell 1999). At the same time, other evidence suggests that conspicuous consumption may not accurately characterize American buying habits. For example, fashions in apparel are fragmented today along lines unrelated to upper-class influence (Crane 2000). Gartman (1991) argues that product designs frequently mask rather than accentuate class differences; his analysis of automobiles provides much support for this position. Furthermore, powerhouse retailers like Wal-Mart and Kmart and McDonalds hardly encourage conspicuous consumption. Heffetz's (2004) analysis of the Bureau of Labor's Consumer Expenditure Survey indicates that people do spend more on items that are highly visible to others—jewelry, cars, or clothing, for example. At the same time, the extra money spent on luxury purchases is not substantial; it accounts for 12 percent of all spending and is confined to the top half of the income distribution.

Luxury is widely ballyhooed in the mass media (O'Guinn and Shrum 1997). But fascination with the lifestyles of the very rich does not mean consumers desire luxury products. An alternate way of looking at conspicuous consumption, however, may be more plausible: to see it as prominent in particular circumstances—as when minorities are trying to break barriers of discrimination. McCracken (1988:96–102), for example, sees business dress for women as emulating the authority of men at work. Likewise, Lamont and Molnar (2001) argue that middle-class blacks may consume conspicuously to distance themselves from more deprived classes. Class may still explain who uses what, and conspicuous consumption may surface in particular instances. Nonetheless, Veblen's ideas are probably not the best way to explain modern consumption.

All this research—on class, subcultures, commodities, and identities—shows how products are used and incorporated into the lives of individuals. The consumer society paradigm also suggests that consumers depend on markets

for resolving ambiguities in identity. In Appadurai's (1986) phrase, commodities have social lives; they have histories, origins, and endpoints. Markets are the arenas where these histories play out: in the technical details of production, in the ways commodities acquire symbolic identities, and in the distribution system that moves products from factories to retail stores and into the hands and homes of consumers. The next major sections consider two parts of consumer markets: the markets that make commodities and the markets that distribute them.

## CONSUMER MARKETS 1: PRODUCING GOODS, CONSTRUCTING SYMBOLS

### Product Diversity: The Case of Fashion

In *The Second Industrial Divide*, Piore and Sabel (1984:189) comment on the "apparent shift in favor of diversity" during the 1970s. Diversity refers to product diversity, that is, the proliferation of commodities differing in styles, colors, and shapes. Diversified goods have similar uses but differ in symbolic meaning; they appeal to consumers with different tastes. According to consumer theorists, product diversity has grown exponentially over the last 40 to 50 years. Growth in product diversity raises an intriguing and important question about consumer markets: Why markets have so many products? The answers given in the literature draw primarily from research on fashions in women's apparel. Though confined to a single area of consumption, the literature on fashion in women's apparel offers insight into how theorists think about production markets and about the demand for product diversity. In this subsection, I first review the historical accounts that theorists use as a backdrop for their ideas and then critically examine the explanations for diversity they provide.

The historical accounts of fashion describe a market in transition. In the mid-nineteenth century up to the years following World War II, women's fashions were dominated by a system of *haute couture*. Key manufacturers and designers such as the House of Chanel or Dior were part of a centralized and hierarchical structure in women's fashions. Styles were relatively homogeneous and changed little from year to year. The designs were initially aimed at an upper-class clientele, but were widely sold to others. In the United States, manufacturers copied elite fashions and sold them at different prices to women varying in income; this practice, in Barber and Lobel's (1953) view, allowed upper-class styles to trickle down to middle- and working-class women—in much the way Veblen predicted.

By the 1970s, the *haute couture* system diminished in importance. Davis (1992:138–45) described new, emergent fashions as democratized, polymorphous, and pluralistic. In the *haute couture* model, fashion diffused from the top down but, according to Crane (2000), fashions began to diffuse from the bottom up—with designers increasingly attuned to diverse subcultures, including minorities, the

young, and the working class. As important as the fragmentation of fashion was the speed at which fashions changed. In the *haute couture* system, styles changed infrequently. In the more pluralistic system, fashions changed more rapidly, as much as five to six times a year or more (Gereffi 1994).

This history is instructive. Fashion products diversified in two ways: first, by becoming more heterogeneous and fragmented—catering to a wider range of tastes and interests; second, by accelerating the pace of change—moving styles in and out of vogue several or more times a year. Why this explosion in product diversity, in the demand for new products and symbols? Many of the explanations offered draw on the very same ideas used in discussions of identity—the increase in heterogeneity and complexity in contemporary societies. According to Crane (2000), new demands emerge in concert with the "fragmentation of contemporary societies" and "the greater complexity of relationships between social groups" (p. 166). Davis (1992) ties fashion change to ambivalence about the self that a "more complex and heterogeneous society" accentuates (p. 24). Other researchers attribute recent fashion change to postmodernity and the breakdown of uniform cultural codes (Kaiser, Nagasawa, and Hutton 1991).

Popular as these explanations may be, they are not entirely satisfying on all accounts. In the first place, more standardized, less diverse fashions are not necessarily incompatible with the differentiation or individualized identities that consumers seek. Consumers, for example, can express individuality in how they put certain looks together or in the accessories they use. Postmodern thought sees individuality shaped not only by using unique products but also by the eclectic use of standardized products. Similarly, Giddens (1991) notes that "mass produced clothing still allows individuals to decide selectively on styles of dress" (p. 200). Individualism may be crafted not only by using distinctive products but also by using mass products in a distinctive way. Holt's (1997) research suggests that individuals can and do creatively use whatever is at hand to craft unique lifestyles.

An additional concern is that many of the traditional explanations appear not so much incorrect as incomplete. Little is mentioned about fashion change in areas other than women's apparel—limited though this literature may be (see, e.g., Gartman 1991; Slater 2002; Postrel 2003; Molotch 2003). Have products diversified at the same pace in these other areas? Traditional explanations also lack specificity—they inadequately account for the way trends in complexity and heterogeneity are differently experienced. Traditional explanations, for example, slight two obvious and related events important for understanding the fragmentation in women's fashions: the wider participation of women in the paid labor force and the rise of feminism. Both events flourished during the sixties and generally empowered women. Increased autonomy, but also increased obligations connected to work, translates into new demands not addressed by upper-class fashions.

The altered status of women suggests that it may be more profitable to think about the demand for new products as a consequence not of changing roles—but of the development of new roles and new social and cultural spaces that women began to occupy.

In spite of these reservations, increased diversity probably characterizes the products in many consumer markets. Simple as this observation appears, an important issue is at stake. Fashion means that products varying in symbolic meaning are vehicles for competition. In classical economics, comparable goods are chosen on the basis of price. But consumer research suggests differently: as products diversify, product competition increases and price competition declines. “Product differentiation means that goods are only imperfect substitutes for each other, so buyers can no longer make direct price comparisons” (Carruthers and Babb 2000:36). Several writers see this increase in product competition as an important turning point in the dynamics of consumer markets. Lash and Urry (1987), for example, suggest that contemporary economies are notable for the production of symbols. In a similar vein, Featherstone (1992) discusses the aestheticization of everyday life as a force in mass consumption and Postrel (2003) identifies aesthetics as remaking commerce.

Finally, what about consumers? How have they reacted to fragmentation in the market for fashions? If identity is a project then consumers ought to be ever at the vigil for new fashions and new styles (Kellner 1992). In fact, diverse fashions appear to promote detachment and anxiety. Research has shown women to be active agents (rather than passive victims) in consuming fashions. Brickell’s (2002) study shows how resistance to fashion trends develops. Thompson and Haytko (1997) see fashion as a tool kit—interpreted, accepted, or dismissed according to the needs and goals of individuals. College students consult fashion magazines but do not necessarily follow the styles they promote; also, “the percentage of women . . . interested in fashionable styles has steadily declined” (Crane 2000:168).

At the same time, the view of carefree consumers dabbling in fashions has limits. One limit is that fragmented fashion creates ambiguity. In Davis’s (1992) view, the rapid pace of change and the “onrush of new fashions” mean that few persons know exactly what is “in” and what is “out” (p. 108). Consuming fashion is emotionally charged. Carefree though they appear, consumers report risks, uncertainty, and anxiety in selecting what to wear (Chua 1992; Thompson and Hirschman 1995). Having many alternatives does not mean decisions are easy to make (Schwartz 2004).

### Manufacturing Product Diversity: Flexible Production and International Trade

Consumer markets also must manufacture diverse products. How is this done? Slater and Tonkiss (2001) succinctly capture the traditional argument regarding the

manufacture of diverse, highly individualized products: “New technological . . . opportunities were emerging that refocused the logic of production away from mass manufacture and mass consumption to flexible responsive production of more differentiated ranges of goods to ever more culturally differentiated consumers” (p. 179). The logic of production in Slater and Tonkiss’s statement refers to the growth of postfordism or flexible production (Piore and Sable 1984; Harvey 1989). Under fordism, machines dedicated to a single task mass produce goods; under postfordism, computerized machines produce goods diverse in colors, styles, and sizes. Hence the connection between product diversity and flexible technology.

The link between “culturally differentiated consumers” and flexible production makes sense—but two points need clarification. The first is that factories (and industries) do not neatly fall into categories of prefordist, fordist, and postfordist production (Vallas 1999). Factories may combine prefordist production with flexible technology to make diverse products. In the apparel industry, for example, computerized technology is widely used in the design and preassembly stages of production; but to actually construct garments, workers frequently sew by hand or use sewing machines (Fine and Leopold 1993; Mather 1993). Thus, product diversity can also result from demands on unskilled workers to engage in multiple tasks that produce different commodities. Taplin (1995, 1996) argues that labor not technology is the flexible resource in apparel production; his research on apparel factories documents how unskilled, low-wage labor is used to accommodate the changing demands of manufacturers.

A second complication refers to the geography of production. Recent research has emphasized global production in addition to flexible technology as contributing to product diversity. Gereffi (1994), for example, suggests that product diversity is facilitated by subcontracting production across a large and diverse pool of factories scattered across the globe. Subcontracting increases flexibility, allowing manufacturers to minimize their investments and search for production facilities to suit their needs. Gereffi’s (1994) research focuses on commodity chains that coordinate production across a decentralized and international network of factories (see also Hassler 2003). In his view, the global *scope* (rather than *scale*) of production is critical for the manufacture of diverse products. More factories are simply available to make more and different commodities. Consistent with Gereffi’s view, Broda and Weinstein’s (2004) analysis of import data indicates that international trade has increased product diversity in the United States by as much as fourfold in recent years.

### Advertising, Brands, and the Cultural Economy

A final step in this review of the production market is the symbolic meaning that diverse products acquire. Designers and manufacturers suggest meanings. Commodities also may acquire symbolic meanings

through use. But advertising is the principle way by which products acquire meaning. According to McCracken (1988:71–89), advertising is a process of transference: Symbols created or taken from the culture are used by advertisers to situate a commodity in cultural space.

The activities of advertisers, including their strategies and negotiations with clients, have been amply discussed. Advertisers meet with manufacturers, identify a market niche in the context of competing products, and then—focusing on particular characteristics of their product—construct a scenario linking their product to a situation that consumers desire (McCracken 1988:71–89; Hennion and Méadel 1989; Slater 2002). Products thus gain an identity, and competing products with similar uses are differentiated in meaning. Does this work—that is, do ads sell? “The conventional wisdom,” as Alan Warde (2002b) has noted, is that “producers are unable to manipulate wants through advertising” (p. 11). This is generally true. Ads carry information, but consumers are not blank slates; they have much information and are subject to multiple influences. Countless studies show that individuals are differentially receptive to an ad’s message—contingent on things such as their attitude toward a product or their receptivity to new information (Hirschman and Thompson 1997; Adaval 2003; Brinol, Petty, and Tormala 2004).

Many of these studies, however, miss the broader influence of advertising on consumers. Branded products illustrate what this influence is about. Brands are the primary way advertisers handle product diversity. Products are symbolically differentiated from each other by membership in different families of commodities: Dell computers, Ann Taylor suits, Panasonic televisions. Brands are, in part, constructed by advertisers and manufacturers. They are vessels that advertisers use to convey the symbolic meaning of products. Studies indicate that brands are among the most important ways consumers evaluate quality, even though they may not buy brands if price is a factor (Holt 2004; Zukin 2004). The more popular brands are, the more successful ads tend to be (Campbell and Keller 2003). Some evidence also suggests that ads are more successful when products are similar in use (Hennion and Méadel 1989:194).

Much research also indicates that it is the brand—not just the product, its style or quality—that is crucial in consumption. When presented with a choice between two identical products—one identified by a well-known or prestigious brand and one that is not—consumers uniformly select the product with the well-known brand name (Behling and Wilch 1988; Hoyer and Brown 1990; McClure et al. 2004). This research suggests a simple but startling conclusion: Individuals are consuming symbols as well as products.

Brands are directed to market niches—to countercultural groups, to a middle class interested in reliability, to yuppies keen on fashion and style. At the same time, manufacturers frequently try to expand sales to other audiences. Therein lies the difficulty in making ads successful tools of

persuasion: how to convey the symbolic value of a product to different market segments. It is well known that persons with different backgrounds interpret mass media messages differently (Shively 1992). It is also the case that persons with different backgrounds interpret ads differently (Grier and Brumbaugh 1999). Advertisers experience much difficulty in customizing ads for diverse audiences (Kates and Goh 2003). For example, attempts to present different ads to market segments may be transparent—and a cause of resistance to an ad’s message. The Hell’s Angels types in Schouten and McAlexander’s (1995) research resented the ads Harley-Davidson addressed to executive bikers as well as to “Dykes on Bikes.” du Gay (1997) indicates that Sony’s initial attempt to customize ads for its Walkman was unsuccessful; sales escalated, however, when the ads’ symbols were integrated into the Walkman’s design.

From a sociological perspective, advertising presents an interesting dilemma. An elementary understanding of the self is that it develops in response to existing cultural frames. Does advertising supply these frames—at least in part? Is it possible, as some scholars have suggested, that advertising profoundly affects our culture and psyche—including the trajectory of our identity projects (Ewen 1977; Williamson 1978)? Several case studies indicate the considerable influence of ads on lifestyles. Prominent here is De Beer’s promotion of diamonds as the essential accessory to marriage (Epstein 1982). Otnes and Pleck (2003) trace the rise of the costly wedding to advertising in bridal magazines. Korzeniewicz (1994) attributes Nike’s success to its ads fueling the boom in health and fitness. Lamont and Molnar (2001) link conspicuous consumption in the black middle class to advertisers. This research is cause for thought and concern. Do existing theories of identity and social change slight the role of advertising and oversimplify explanations of consumption? More research is needed on this important issue.

## CONSUMER MARKETS 2: SHOPPING AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS

Retail trade is the other key market in the consumer society. To Marx ([1867] 1990), retailers were the petty bourgeoisie, incidental to the major forces of production. By contrast, retailers today are more likely to be major corporations. Corporate growth has prompted scholars to reconsider the role of retailing in the economy. They suggest that retailers are a new source of power in the marketplace. They also argue that growth and power have been used to transform shopping, to make it pleasant and entertaining—thereby stimulating sales and enthusiasm for commodities.

### The Retail Revolution

All observers concur that large corporations increasingly dominate retail trade (Mills 1951; Chandler 1962;

Bluestone et al. 1981; du Gay 1993). Mills (1951:166–69) characterized the “big bazaar” as large, monolithic, and relentlessly in pursuit of growth, whereas du Gay (1993:569) concluded that the retail industry is now “dominated and controlled by large companies.” In the 1960s, retail firms with 100 or more stores accounted for 15 percent of all sales as compared with the 40 percent they control today (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1966, 2001).

Paralleling the growth of the firm is the growth of the store itself. Stores are increasingly able to stock the diverse commodities essential to individualized identity projects. Many stores today are big box retail outlets: large discount stores, department stores, supermarkets, and “category killers” specializing in a range of related products (such as Home Depot or Office Max). From the retailer’s perspective, big stores are more economical to run and sell products more efficiently than “mom and pop stores” (Hahn 2000). Store growth is substantial. Mills (1951:166–69) estimated that in the 1950s, Macy’s flagship store stocked 400,000 items; today, flagship stores carry between 1 and 2 million items (Abernathy 1999:41). According to Walsh (1993:9), supermarkets in the 1950s and 1960s carried 5000 to 8000 items as compared with the 40,000 to 60,000 items they carry today (Abernathy 1999:41).

Ritzer (1993) and others argue that the growth and concentration of retail firms provide resources for rationalizing operations (Noyelle 1987; Gereffi 1994). Large firms are more sophisticated in transporting goods and managing inventory. Furthermore, large retailers order more goods and bargain more effectively with suppliers for lower prices. Volume sales also reduce costs. These factors, commonly associated with the retail revolution, make large firms more competitive. Additionally, the advent of shopping malls in the 1960s and 1970s accentuated competition in two other ways: increasing the number of large apparel chains and providing an outlet for these chains to sell niche fashions nationwide.

It is also the case that retailers are more vertically integrated, more involved in manufacturing than was true in the fifties and sixties. Gereffi (1994) speaks of fashion retailers as “buyer driven” and Murray (1989) argues that new computer technology allows retailers to better track consumer demand and regulate supply. Blumer (1969) suggests that fashion is a sequence of collective selection in which key gatekeepers—designers, retail buyers, marketing analysts—decide what looks good and what does not. These gatekeepers are increasingly prominent in retail chains. Chains are more attuned to and attentive to the demands of their clientele. Market research has become significant in producing styles. Crane (2000) notes that success in the market depends on being “able to identify lifestyles that resonate with the public” (p. 168). Rubinstein (1995) similarly observes that “the profitable way of doing business . . . is to study the customers, find out what they want, and make and market it” (p. 237). As retailers became more knowledgeable about their clientele, they are also able to create new specialty niches—as

illustrated in the recent growth of markets for children and young girls (Cook 2004; Cook and Kaiser 2004).

The dominance of retail chains has led researchers to conclude that “the balance of relative power has shifted firmly to the side of the retailer” (du Gay 1993:570) (Crewe and Davenport 1992; Wrigley 1992). While size does contribute to power, this conclusion must be qualified in several ways. In the first place, though the independent single-unit retail firm is by no means dominant, neither is it a relic. Independent single-unit stores today comprise 60 percent of the total number of all stores and account for about 40 percent of all sales (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001:307). Furthermore, in sectors where personalized services are in demand, chains may be less prominent (Stillman 2003). In the restaurant industry, for example, 70 percent of all businesses are single, individually owned stores and account for about 50 percent of sales (Nelson 2001). Finally, in some sectors, automobiles and housing, for example, manufacturers tightly control retail operations.

In the second place, retail power may not translate into higher profits—at least when compared with the profits of manufacturers (Messinger and Narasimhan 1995). Ailawadi, Borin, and Farris (1995) report that only Wal-Mart has eroded manufacturers’ profits but other retailers have not. Bloom and Perry (2001) suggest a further qualification: Large manufacturers do better when dealing with Wal-Mart but smaller ones suffer.

A third issue involves the view of the retail revolution as a technological transformation (Noyelle 1987). It is true that large chains increasingly use computer technology to monitor inventory, consumer demand, and sales. It is also the case that retailers are more productive than in the past (Sieling, Friedman, and Dumas 2001). Productivity, however, is a function of both technology and the way labor is used. Popular brands reduce labor costs through self-service sales—where consumers rather than sales personnel “reach for the product” (Twitchell 1999:189). Self-service sales may be “the single most important factor in containing labour costs” in retail trade (du Gay 1993:572). Unfortunately, self-service strategies have been slighted in understanding how large chains have become productive, competitive, and powerful.

## Shopping

Much research suggests that in addition to monitoring inventory and sales, retailers have tried to alter the experience of shoppers. Their techniques go well beyond the dazzling display of goods department stores used in the past (Williams 1982). Shopping malls today commonly have movie theaters, themed restaurants, children’s rides, and skating rinks to entertain customers. Control mechanisms are integrated into the design of shopping centers; they range from the placement of escalators to the use of lighting to the mix of stores. All are designed to increase exposure to products, lengthen the time spent shopping and

stimulate impulse buying. Recent research points to high-tech innovations using media and entertainment environments of moving light, upbeat sound, and multiple video screens—frequently inviting consumers to participate in sports-related fantasies (Sherry et al. 2001; Kozinets et al. 2002, 2004).

Ritzer (2005) sees these innovations as new marketing controls used to revolutionize consumption in a “disenchanted world.” He sees malls as “cathedrals of consumption,” both rationalized and sophisticated in their influence on consumers. Malls are important; they contain the retail chains vital in lifestyle shopping (Shields 1992). Much research suggests that a store’s image is a significant source of attraction in shopping (Baker, Grewal, and Parasuraman 1994; Zimmer and Golden 1988). Research findings for malls are comparable. Consumers who find malls entertaining and exciting also indicate that they are eager to return (Finn and Louviere 1996; Wakefield and Baker 1998). A small number of consumers use shopping to relax. Not surprisingly, more utilitarian shoppers are less likely to visit malls (Roy 1994). The themed environment in many malls is designed to encourage fantasies (Gottdiener 1997). Research indicates that fantasizing about material goods is common (Fournier and Guiry 1993) and further that individuals who indulge in such fantasies likely shop frequently and compulsively (O’Guinn and Faber 1989). From a sociological perspective, fantasy allows consumers to play with and explore different presentations of self.

Shopping is also seen as time to spend with family and friends (Arnold and Reynolds 2003). If shopping formerly was (women’s) work, it is now also used for entertainment and leisure. When consumers do shop to relax, they are less likely to consider price (Wakefield and Inman 2003). Shopping with friends is popular with teenagers; it increases their enjoyment and also the money they spend (Mangleburg, Doney, and Bristol 2004). Social shopping has two additional, though seemingly contradictory effects. When in a group, shoppers seek more variety in their choices to impress others with their individuality (Ratner, Kahn, and Kahneman 1999; Ariely and Levav 2000). Shoppers also solicit advice from their shopping partners on whether their selections are acceptable and appropriate (Chua 1992). Shopping with others thus provides both the individuality and the collective connections that Simmel ([1904] 1957) saw as essential to fashion and consumption.

In summary, many shoppers seem to mirror the intended impact of the mall’s design. They see shopping as leisure rather than work, are entertained at the mall, and will likely return there to shop again. At the same time, it is unfair to conclude that most shoppers resemble the stereotypical “shop ’til I drop” consumer. The wider context here is that materialism is not higher in the United States than other countries (Ger and Belk 1999) and that spending on commodities has not increased over the past—the reverse is in fact the case (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005).

A more accurate summary is that retailing reflects a *mélange* of stores and a variety of shoppers. It may be a retail world revolutionized or transformed—but the transformation is partial and incomplete. Shoppers buy not only in retail malls but also from family, friends, and neighbors (Frenzen and Davis 1990; DiMaggio and Louch 1998). While they spend more in the company of friends, shoppers also stress thrift as a virtue (Miller 1998; Zukin 2004). Much shopping, particularly twice-a-week visits to supermarkets, hardly qualifies as lifestyle shopping (Miller 1997). Furthermore, alongside those who shop to relax are utilitarian shoppers; they visit malls infrequently but when they do, it is to buy something rather than to be entertained (Bloch, Ridgway, and Dawson 1994; Roy 1994).

## CONCLUSIONS

The paradigm of a consumer society is more than an umbrella covering the diversity of consumer research. Unlike neo-Marxist views, the paradigm highlights the satisfactions and pleasures of commodities. Unlike utilitarian views, the paradigm highlights the symbolism commodities possess. Unlike mechanistic views, the paradigm highlights the interdependency of consumers and markets, while at the same time seeing individuals as active agents and culture as integral to social life.

This paradigm has been advanced by an enormous resurgence of research—documenting the importance of consumer behavior without celebrating consumerism itself. Policy issues have not been central to the consumer society paradigm, but the problems of consumer credit (Ritzer 1995), the environment (Wilk 2001), political protest (Holt 2002), and discrimination associated with race, class, and gender have all been addressed (Caplovitz 1963; Ayres and Siegelman 1995). Common to these policy concerns is an indictment of the unfettered consumer market associated with capitalism.

All paradigms have flaws, and the consumer society is no exception. Consumption is important in contemporary societies; but societies are too complex to be called *consumer* societies any more than they can be called industrial societies, postindustrial societies, or postmodern societies (Kumar 1995; Warde 2002a). By describing societies as consumer societies, the paradigm glosses over important variations critical to explore. For example, much is known about consumption and identity but, surprisingly, little about those who have resolved or otherwise minimized identity issues. How and what do these individuals consume? Similar problems of omission plague the other key term in the paradigm: the market. Consumer research overwhelmingly focuses on apparel and food. By contrast, other products have been slighted (though not necessarily ignored). Some critics have argued that commodities vary in their relevance to identity (Ilmonen 2001). Others suggest that markets operate differently for each commodity (Fine and Leopold 1993). Regardless of the merit of these

criticisms, a typology of commodities might be a useful way to study many different commodities and enrich the framework researchers use.

In conclusion, researchers of consumption have fought an uphill and increasingly successful battle. They have rescued an area long relegated to the wasteland of sociological research. They also have joined in an interdisciplinary

effort including cultural studies, anthropology, economics, marketing, and retailing. But the stigma associated with studying consumption in sociology may still persist; at this time, the very top research journals in American sociology infrequently publish research on consumer behavior. The challenge in the next decades will be to increase this area's prominence and bring to it the attention it deserves.



## THE SOCIOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT

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In common sense one principal meaning of the verb *to entertain* is to provide the public with something enjoyable, or pleasurable, that holds their attention for the period of time the entertaining object or occasion is perceived. In entertainment that truly entertains (recognizing that some would-be entertainment “flops”), attention is diverted from all other matters, hence occasional usage of one of its synonyms—diversion. In general, these commonsensical terms are employed with reference to what Lewis (1978:16–17) calls “moderately complex” (as opposed to “simple” or “highly complex”) objects and occasions (e.g., a comic strip, television sitcom, popular song, Broadway play). Etymologically the verb to entertain evolved from precursors in Latin and Old and Middle French (*entretenir*) meaning to hold.

Of course many things can hold our attention, among them, pain, fear, serious study, and execution of a finely honed skill such as playing the violin, which in the sense just set out, are anything but entertaining. The breadth of and inherent contradictions in the commonsense idea of entertainment have forced sociologists to narrow substantially the scope of interest here. This they have done in four ways, and, in the process, also more precisely adumbrated the subdiscipline of sociology of entertainment.

First, sociology, under the aegis of entertainment, has centered on that which is largely, if not, purely pleasurable, leaving for other branches of knowledge the study of greatly fulfilling activities that can engender a certain amount of pleasure but are nonetheless founded on substantial skill, knowledge, or experience or a combination of these. Examples of the latter include the joy *and* fulfillment of doing well at skiing, crocheting, dancing, or

collecting plates (see Stebbins 2004a for a discussion of the difference between pleasure and enjoyment, on the one hand, and fulfillment, on the other). Nevertheless, as will be noted shortly, this line is not always easily drawn.

Second, the sociology of entertainment has confined itself to people enacting the role of entertainer—street performers, popular singers, stand-up comics, film and television actors, strippers, pornographic models and actors, and the like. This leaves for other fields of the analysis of roles where entertainment, if it occurs at all, is incidental and peripheral to the main purpose of the role or where entertainment comes from a source other than an entertainer (see discussion below of casual leisure). Examples of incidental/peripheral entertainment include entertaining moments in a classical music concert, scientific talk, or serious drama (experienced here as comic relief).

Third, entertainers, as studied in the sociology of entertainment, have been either amateur or professional, with both holding a commercial orientation toward their art. That is, the professionals develop a product designed to sell to a public and the amateurs, although they often perform without pay, model their products on professional exemplars (Stebbins 1992:8–9). Moreover, the amateurs are not folk artists (see discussion in the section on the nature of entertainment).

Fourth, over the years, sociologists have tended to concentrate on one or two of six distinctive facets of the field of entertainment, classified and discussed in this chapter as (1) nature of entertainment, (2) role of entertainer, (3) public that consumes entertainment (e.g., fans, buffs, audiences), (4) content of entertainment, (5) industry that produces it, and (6) place of entertainment in society.

Two core concepts organize this branch of sociology. One—*entertainment*—may, in light of the preceding discussion, be defined as an object or occasion intentionally provided to a public for their enjoyment, or pleasure, that is meant to hold their attention for the period of time the object or occasion is perceived. That the entertainment may, for various reasons, flop with some or all members of the public, although an unhappy situation for the would-be entertainer, does not contradict this definition. For the *intention* had been to entertain. The second core concept—the *entertainer*—may be defined as a performer who, directly or indirectly (e.g., via film, TV, videotape), from a stage or equivalent, provides entertainment to a public. Given that the sociology of entertainment is largely at the exploratory stage of development, these definitions should be considered tentative, subject to revision as new, open-ended, discovery-oriented research suggests (Stebbins 2001a). Indeed, as we learn more about this area, this conceptual core could be expanded with other basic ideas.

## SOCIOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT AS SUBDISCIPLINE

This section covers a representative selection of the literature comprising the subdiscipline of the sociology of entertainment, organized according to the six facets. In all cases, the subject of the work reviewed must be primarily about entertainers or entertainment considered from a sociological point of view. This principle excludes wide-ranging works on, for example, the sociology of art, popular culture, or communication in which entertainment is but one of many cultural forms under scrutiny. For instance, research exists on strippers conducted and analyzed in both the feminist and the deviance traditions that, however, says little about such work as being entertaining. Similarly, certain legal questions bearing on entertainment are technical concerns that lie beyond the scope of sociology. Also excluded are works that use a form of entertainment as a springboard for examining something outside of or broader than the field of entertainment.

Note that, with the handful of exceptions noted below, the sociology of entertainment lacks its own theory; that is, no one has proposed a set of abstract principles defining the field, nor has one emerged inductively from research done in it. In harmony with this observation is the fact that very little theoretical or empirical work has been published on entertainers or entertainment per se. Indeed, until now, neither of these two central terms had been defined scientifically, defined beyond their commonsense conceptions discussed above. Weinstein's (1991) observations on the academic discourse on popular music describes equally well that on the sociology of entertainment.

Academic discourse on popular music since the 1980s has been a bricolage. It would have been called a semi-congeries in an earlier time: Popular music studies do not constitute

a discipline; there is no master name to expose, no theory to deconstruct. Most writers focus on the social relations surrounding the production or the appreciation of the music; others are concerned with the being of popular music or at least its system. . . . Study of rock music, popular music or in general floats without benefit or liability of an episteme. (Pp. 97–98)

In the broader field of entertainment, scholars, sometimes guided by theoretical perspectives developed in other areas, have attended much more specifically to one or a few of the six facets and, within those facets or particular facets, on a particular part of them. Much of this work is descriptive, as indeed it must be, to the extent it is intended as exploration. For instance, we shall see later that some researchers are interested in the lives of famous movie stars while others focus on the nature of audience-performer interaction in rock music, with neither generalizing, however tentatively, to the field of entertainment or even the larger facet in which their work is embedded, which are, in these two examples, the entertainment role and the entertainment public.

Given this tendency, a main goal of this chapter is to offer a rudimentary conceptual framework that can help guide research in this area as well as help distinguish the area from its intellectual neighbors, especially the sociologies of art, music, culture, leisure, and popular culture. To this end, I will introduce in certain sections one or more orienting concepts that, contrary to comments just made, have emerged inductively from research on entertainers, even though those same concepts have also been shaped through research on hobbyists, volunteers, amateurs, and professionals working well beyond the realm of entertainment. The literature reviewed here under each heading has been selected as illustrative of sociological work undertaken over approximately the past four to five decades. A full literature review is impossible, given editorial page limitations, for despite its fragmented nature, the sociology of entertainment has an enormous corpus of writing, even within the limits just established.

## THE NATURE OF ENTERTAINMENT

In addition to what has just been said about the nature of entertainment, it should be noted that, for its consumers when they are truly entertained, they are immersed in a leisure experience. In this instance, the experience is primarily pleasurable, one of enjoyment and little else. Such leisure is casual. *Casual leisure* is immediately intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it (Stebbins 1997, 2001b). It is fundamentally hedonic, engaged in for the significant level of pure enjoyment, or pleasure, found there. It is also the classificatory home of much of deviant leisure (Rojek 2000; Stebbins 1996a). Of the eight types of casual leisure now identified (listed in Stebbins 2004b), the

one labeled “passive entertainment” bears most directly on the sociology of entertainment. This is the classificatory home of sedentary, “couch-potato” leisure that, for its enjoyment, requires little more than turning a dial, pressing a button, flipping a switch, attending a concert, and the like. In the passive type an entertainment device—radio, stereo, television set, DVD player—once activated, does all that is necessary to provide the sought after diversion, as provided by one or more entertainers.

Casual leisure, as an object of social scientific inquiry, is of further importance in that analyses of this use of free time explain all enjoyable diversion, whereas the sociology of entertainment centers more narrowly on the enjoyment made possible by entertainers. For example a display of scenic beauty in a film, videotape, or set of photographs (the type of casual leisure known as “sensory stimulation”) may well be qualified as entertaining by viewers, even though it was not produced by someone they would call an entertainer. The same can be said for enjoyment felt when playing, say a board game (example of the “active entertainment” type of casual leisure), even though the game was likely created not by an entertainer but by an employee working for the manufacturer of the game.

Another theoretic scheme to emerge, in part, from research on entertainment is Lewis’s (1978:16–17) ideal-typical elaboration of folk, popular, and high culture. Entertainment can be considered part of the second, which includes commercially viable folk music, folk dance, and the like (indigenous folk culture being essentially noncommercial, see Lewis 1978:16). Two components of these three types are of interest here: (1) structure and appreciation of the form and (2) orientation of the cultural product. In popular culture, the entertaining object or occasion is moderately complex (structure). The highly complex objects and occasions of high culture, which to be appreciated require training, judgment, analysis, and so on, produce experiences for its public that, for them, are best qualified as primarily fulfilling (even though pleasure may also be experienced). Another component in Lewis’s three types is whether the cultural product is consumer or creator oriented. Entertainment, served up as popular culture, is clearly consumer oriented, unlike the creator-oriented products of high culture.

Is entertainment an art? This is a reasonable question, since the entertaining act or activity is simple enough to be understood without significant effort and could therefore be written off as unartistic. Nevertheless, the answer is affirmative, for designing and presenting a product that truly entertains a vast public requires all the essential ingredients of art (see Munro 1957:45). For instance, although some entertainers do provide their audiences with aesthetic or emotionally moving experiences (e.g., soap operas, televised crime shows), laughter seems to be the main emotion they stir. Most of the time, their role is to amuse. And certainly these performers offer something pleasant and interesting. Moreover, there is often considerable personal interpretation inspiring the routinizing and presentation of an act.

## THE ENTERTAINER ROLE

While the public of an entertainment form is enjoying itself in casual leisure, the producers of it are having a quite different experience. In this role they perform, each in his social world, as either amateurs or professionals and, to be described later, as either regulars or insiders. The amateurs, of course, are engaged in a form of leisure of their own, which however, is not casual but serious. *Serious leisure* is systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins 1992:3). The adjective *serious* (a word Stebbins’s research respondents often used) embodies such qualities as earnestness, sincerity, importance, and carefulness. This adjective signals the importance of these three kinds of activity in the everyday lives of participants, in that pursuing the three eventually engenders deep self-fulfillment. Serious leisure is further distinguished from casual leisure by six characteristics of the former: (1) need to persevere at the activity, (2) availability of a leisure career, (3) need to put in effort to gain skill and knowledge, (4) realization of various special benefits, (5) unique ethos and social world, and (6) an attractive personal and social identity. Stebbins’s studies of amateur magicians ([1984] 1993) and stand-up comics (1990) may be unique in the field of nonprofessional entertainment.

The professionals in entertainment can be viewed as *public centered* rather than *client centered*. The first serve publics in art, sport, science, and entertainment, whereas the second serve a set of clients such as patients or purchasers of a highly skilled service offered by, say, a lawyer, architect, counsellor, engineer, or accountant (Stebbins 1992:22). Furthermore, amateurs and professionals filling an entertainment role regularly provide a particular type of enjoyment for a particular public. We are accustomed to calling these people “entertainers”; they perform by presenting pleasurable material to live audiences or remote ones listening or viewing the same material in a television program, videotape, published photograph, audio recording, or similar media. But as mentioned, there are also people who amuse us in ways other than this. Cartoonists, comic book writers, some poets and novelists and possibly others entertain with their works but do not usually perform, as it were, from a stage. In principle, then, because of this commonsensical inconsistency, the process of entertainment is actually broader than the entertainer role. Be that as it may, sociologists, perhaps taking their cue from such popular usage, have devoted nearly all their attention to the latter, and consequently, only that part of the broader entertainment field is covered in this chapter.

Discussion of the entertainment role goes hand in hand with discussion of the careers of those who fill it. And, since all professional entertainers were once amateurs, the career model embraces both. White (1993, chap. 3) explores the

careers of artists of all kinds, while Stebbins (1990, chaps. 4–5, [1984] 1993, chap. 4, 1996b:47–60) does this for magicians, stand-up comics, and hobbyist barbershop singers. Bennett (1980) examines the early career of the rock musician. Bausinger (1993), in a rare analysis of entertainment in general, gives a historical account of a career in that field. Knight's (2002) study of integrating black performance in American musical film can be interpreted as an analysis of racially based career contingencies in that art. Stebbins (1990:59–60) presents a typology of stages for analyzing career passage in the public-centered arts.

## MUSICAL ENTERTAINERS

Musical entertainers—singers and instrumentalists—have attracted a substantial amount of sociological research. Here, where work on rock musicians predominates, we have, for example, Bennett's (1980) research on becoming a rock musician, Regev's treatise (1994) on how this type of performer produces artistic value, and Weinstein's (1991) history and ethnography of the heavy metal scene in the United States—a genre of rock that got its start in the 1960s. Wills and Cooper (1988) studied the pressures experienced by rock musicians, which they argue are often met with excessive use of drugs and alcohol. Moore (2001) approaches rock musicologically, analyzing its unique sounds and exploring the relationship between self-expression and musical style as well as the evolution of rock styles. Sometimes individual stars have been the object of interest, as in Werner's (2004) study of selected American soul artists.

Gender has been a prominent interest in this area. Clawson (1999) interviewed male and female electric bass players of rock music to learn why the latter are disproportionately attracted to this instrument. She found that the electric bass is relatively easy to learn, although relatively few men are interested in playing it. Groce and Cooper (1990) examined the musical experiences of women in local rock bands in two American cities, embedded as they are in a world centered on and dominated by male musicians. Brown and Campbell (1986) have also studied the gender bias in rock, this time as observed in musical videos.

Research on musical entertainers has centered almost exclusively on professionals, whether parttime or fulltime.

## ACTORS IN ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainers working in one or more of the theater arts have also been studied, even more so, it appears, than singers and instrumentalists. Stebbins (1990) examined stand-up comics and, earlier, both Stebbins ([1984] 1993) and Nardi (1984) studied entertainment magicians. Some entertainers in this category are essentially variety artists, including street performers (Mulkay and Howe 1994), British pub entertainers (Mullen 1985), and participants in

any of the multitude of gypsy troupes (Gmelch 1986). Film and television actors have also been investigated, as far back as Powdermaker's (1950) classic study of the Hollywood actor and then, much later, through work by Mast (1986) on actor identity and by Friedman (1990) on occupational culture and career of actors. Zuckerman et al. (2003) have examined the effects on the actor's career of typecasting. Television news personalities belong to this category as well, but there appears to be no sociological research on them. Individual actors have also been the object of sociological attention (e.g., Hayward 2000; Portales 2000; Valdivia 1998).

Additionally, deviant entertainer roles have received some attention, including strippers, topless dancers, and similar performers (e.g., Clark 1985; Thompson, Harred, and Burks 2003). Skipper and McCaghy (1971) wrote the classic study in this area. Mestemacher and Roberti (2004) provide an up-to-date review of the sociological literature on strippers. Meanwhile, scientifically speaking, pornographic actors and models of both sexes seem to have been ignored. Drag performers and male and female impersonators also belong to this category, research on whom dates to the 1970s when Newton (1979) conducted a classic study on the latter. Since then, several papers have been written on both sexes in drag (e.g., Patterson 2002; Rhyne 2004; Schacht and Underwood 2004).

Some kinds of dancers (in addition to the aforementioned exotic variety) may also be classified as entertainers, even though I could find no sociological literature on them. Thus, dancers of the tap, choral, and synchronized variety, among others, remain to be sociologically scrutinized. The deviant trade of "lap dancing" is not dancing at all but a kind of sexual service (the "sensory stimulation" type of casual leisure) not unlike that delivered in some massage parlors.

Many musical and dramatic arts, as well as various acrobatic or gymnastic feats and variety acts (e.g., magic, juggling, pantomime), can be performed in the street, with or without a temporary stage. Yet street performers, who, when itinerant, are called buskers, have not been widely studied sociologically. The main contribution here is Shrum's (1996:pt. II) lively description of the fringe festival, essentially an organized session of street performing lasting several days in one or a few prearranged local venues, which since its origin in Edinburgh, has been copied in several parts of the world.

Furthermore, many street arts are also enacted in the circus. Again, sociological work is scarce in this area. Still, the clown has been analyzed, as by Little (1993) who studied the nature of clownish performance as well as the meaning for clowns of their work and lifestyle (Little 1991). Carmeli (1996a) studied the circus performer's body, comparing acrobatic acts with the sport body as presented and observed in gymnastics. Caforio (1987) interviewed members of several circuses performing in Northern Italy, finding that they form a closed world fraught with numerous contradictions and problems.

Television and, today to a lesser extent, radio offer media personalities to their viewers and listeners, who may be newscasters, sportscasters, commentators, interviewers on talk shows, stars in sitcoms, and similar roles. With a few notable exceptions, research is rare on these people. Tolson (2001) compared talk shows in Great Britain and the United States. Grindstaff (2002) described the origin of the American televised talk show as well as how such a show is produced and its appeal distributed according to social class. Smith-Shomade (2002) limits her analysis of the talk show to the images it portrays of African American women, who although now an essential part of this genre, are still often presented in a distorted and deviant light. Abt (1997), covering a decade of viewing, wrote the first book-length study of televised talk shows in the United States. She examined their aesthetics as well as their evolution and cultural significance, concluding that they are anything but a harmless pastime.

## THE PUBLIC

As we are limiting coverage of the entertainment role to entertainers, the public to whom they address their art is always an audience, which usually both views and listens to what is presented (though we can only listen to an audio recording, only view a mime). In the language of the social world perspective, the public includes "tourists," those who occasionally "visit" particular kinds of entertainment. Yet as Adorno (1962:14–17) pointed out for music, only some of this audience is present primarily for the purpose of being entertained. That is, some stage arts are also performed for "experts" or for a variety of other types of listeners whose reasons for consuming the art are other than the pursuit of pleasure. By contrast, the proper focus of the sociology of entertainment is what Adorno calls the "entertainment audience," usually by far the largest segment of any mass cultural audience.

The public is a significant part of the entertainer's social world. Unruh developed the following definition, which I have found fits well (e.g., Stebbins 1996b) as a partial explanation of a field of entertainment as defined here:

A social world must be seen as a unit of social organization which is diffuse and amorphous in character. Generally larger than groups or organizations, social worlds are not necessarily defined by formal boundaries, membership lists, or spatial territory. . . . A social world must be seen as an internally recognizable constellation of actors, organizations, events, and practices which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants. Characteristically, a social world lacks a powerful centralized authority structure and is delimited by . . . effective communication and not territory nor formal group membership. (Unruh 1980:277)

In another paper, Unruh (1979) added that the typical social world is characterized by voluntary identification, by a freedom to enter into and depart from it. Moreover, because it is so diffuse, ordinary members can only be

partly involved in the full range of its activities. After all, a social world may be local, regional, multiregional, national, or even international. Also, people in complex societies such as Canada and the United States are often members of several social worlds. Finally, social worlds are held together, to an important degree, by semiformal, or mediated, communication. They are rarely heavily bureaucratized, yet due to their diffuseness, they are rarely characterized by intense face-to-face interaction. Rather, communication is typically mediated by newsletters, posted notices, telephone messages, mass mailings, Internet communications, radio and television announcements, and similar means, with the strong possibility that, in future, the Internet could become the most popular of these.

Every social world contains four types of members: strangers, tourists, regulars, and insiders (Unruh 1979, 1980). The strangers are intermediaries who normally participate little in the entertainment activity itself, but who nonetheless do something important to make it possible, for example, by managing a theater, repairing musical instruments, or running the local performers' union. Tourists are temporary participants in a social world; they are the audience or public who have come on the scene momentarily for entertainment. Regulars routinely participate in the social world; in serious leisure, they are the amateurs and hobbyists themselves. Insiders are those among them who show exceptional devotion to the social world they share, to maintaining it, to advancing it. This is also where the professionals in a given entertainment field are found.

Returning to research on the entertainment public, Jones and Harvey (1980) examined interaction between rock bands and their audiences. Frederickson (1989) argues that electronic media are capable of replacing live human performers, thereby dramatically changing the relationship between musician and audience. Carmeli (1996b), after analyzing a fakir act in a British circus, showed how middle- and working-class audiences differently perceive it. Grabe (1997) conducted a demographic analysis of the country music audience that was found to have expanded well beyond its initial rural, working-class base. It is now a mass art. Additionally Brooker and Jermyn (2003) have edited a valuable anthology of audience studies, which includes several chapters on film and film stars. Handelman (1991) analyzes the audience's perception of the circus performer's body (e.g., acrobats, aerialists, contortionists). Cawelti (1997) describes the diverse problems that come with doing research on film and television audiences.

It is also possible to conceive of parts of the generalized public (as opposed to particular audiences at particular performances) as "tribes." This metaphor, elaborated by Michel Maffesoli (1996), identifies and describes a post-modern phenomenon that spans national borders. It is thus much broader and more sociological than its anthropological precursor. Maffesoli observes that mass culture has disintegrated, leaving in its wake a diversity of tribes. These tribes are fragmented groupings left over from the preceding era of mass consumption, groupings recognized today by their unique tastes, lifestyles, and form of social

organization. Such groupings exist for the pleasure of their members to share the warmth of being together, socializing with each other, seeing and touching each other, and so on, a highly emotional process. In this, they are both participants and observers, as exemplified by in-group hair-styles, bodily modifications, and items of apparel. This produces a sort of solidarity among members not unlike that found in certain religions and many primitive tribes.

I have argued that much of postmodern tribalization has taken place in the spheres of leisure and entertainment, where it has given birth to a small number of activity-based, serious leisure tribes and a considerably larger number of taste-based, casual leisure tribes (Stebbins 2002, chap. 5). In entertainment, tribes have formed around, for example, soap opera, *Star Trek*, and heavy metal music. To explain its classification as a tribe, each will be described in some detail.

The soap opera, a genre of its own, has been conceptualized at the consumptive level by the author (Stebbins 2002:67–69) as a form of tribal leisure. The dedicated followers of soap operas constitute an organizationally complex tribe operating on an international scale (even though programs tend to differ from country to country). Babrow (1990) studied a sample of American university students who routinely watched “soaps.” He found that sociality—talk with other students about the program as it is being broadcast—is also a motive for watching these programs.

Mary Ellen Brown (1994) interviewed several small samples of female soap opera fans in Australia and the United States. Although some women watch them alone, most have some kind of social involvement with other women who enjoy the same programs. Her interviewees were not members of fan clubs but rather belonged to networks composed of small numbers of family or friends. Brown (1994) also noted a second level of fanship, defined as all people who watch a particular soap. Second-order people, she explains, meet “in buses, at work, at school, or somewhere else in passing, find that they watch such-and-such a soap opera, and discuss the current issues on that soap opera with them” (p. 80). A taste-based tribe to be sure, but one that has been around for decades, predating even television when soaps were available only on radio.

The “Trekkies” and “Trekkers” constitute another example, having emerged as the highly dedicated viewing audience of the television series *Star Trek* and related films. Since the 1970s when the series began, they have evolved into an activity-based tribe, consisting of young and middle-aged adults. To be sure, Trekkies are entertained as they watch periodic installments of *Star Trek*, but they also gain considerable fulfillment through identifying and analyzing the many Freudian themes and stereotypic sex roles found in each show (Deegan 1983). Its comparatively more complex level of organization suggests that this tribe can be classified as a liberal arts hobby with its characteristic social world, for Trekkies now have their own fanzine, books, newsletters, artifacts, home page, and even periodic conventions.

Friesen’s (1990) study of fans of heavy metal music in Calgary is part of this small corpus. Although not strictly

analyzed from the perspective of leisure tribes, it nonetheless clearly shows that these fans help comprise one. He found this music was extremely important to his sample of young people; next to friendship it was their greatest source of personal enjoyment. The music was listened to in the company of others who also enjoyed it, who gained their sense of belonging to this tribe, in part, by defending its music to the larger world, which tended then, as now, to marginalize both it and its fans as deviant.

## CONTENT

A good deal of attention has been given to the content of some forms of entertainment, while the content of other forms has been virtually ignored. Thus Geraghty (1990) examined the images of women in British and American televised soap operas, noting considerable self-parody and the fact that soaps are now written for both sexes. In the section of her book on production of culture, Crane (1992) addresses herself to televised entertainment and the content of news, concluding from a review of the literature that television is designed to reflect the tastes, interests, and attitudes of the typical viewer. Turner (1999), working along the same lines, finds, in harmony with Crane’s conclusions, that programming in modern television news and commentary on current events has undergone “tabloidization.” Indeed Altheide and Snow (1991:16–18) state, quite bluntly, that radio and television news is first and foremost entertainment.

Taylor (1989) looks at the film *Gone with the Wind*, as a vehicle for exploring how cinematic gender biases are first created and then received by female viewers. Valdivia (1998) studied the construction of Latinas in Hollywood films featuring Rosie Perez, especially with respect to traditional ethnic stereotypes. Finally, returning to the deviant wing of entertainment, Monk-Turner and Purcell (1999) look at the treatment of female characters portrayed in videocassette pornography. They found that there, compared with white women, black women experienced more violence at the hands of both black and white men.

The content of televised sport has also drawn a good deal of attention. Hesling (1986) found that it served three basic functions: (1) providing a fascinating illusion of reality, (2) supplying surplus information (e.g., sports trivia), and (3) transforming the original sport event into an entertainment spectacle. Miller (1998) observed a noticeable narrowness in the United States in the reporting of the 1998 World Cup Soccer Tournament, evidenced for instance in lack of recognition of the World Cup achievements of participants from the southern hemisphere. Tuggle and Owen (1999) learned that the National Broadcasting Company skewed their coverage of the 1998 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, by showing substantially more female individual than team sport events, while coverage of male team sport was much higher. This bias was especially pronounced in hard-hitting team sport. In another sport, Atkinson (2002) found that professional

wrestling derives much of its appeal from the ways it stages violence as something its audiences see as both “sporting” and “exciting.” Violence on television often sells well. At least that is what some producers of “reality-based” police shows appear to believe, for Oliver and Armstrong (1995) concluded that, compared with ordinary life, violent crime is overrepresented in these shows.

Popular music has also been examined for its content, as seen, for example, in McKee and Pardun’s (1996) comparative study of sexual and religious imagery in rock, country, and Christian videos. Such imagery is relatively uncommon, however, occurring in approximately 30 percent of the sample ( $N = 207$ ) and about equally across the three types. Abrahamson (2002) found that, when played over transnational media, the Americanness of country music holds up well. And Frith (1987) observed that the central purpose of lyrics in popular song is not their intended impact on the audience but their function as a vehicle for the human voice to convey emotion.

## THE INDUSTRY

The entertainment “industry” consists of, among other elements, critics, recording firms, radio and television corporations, film companies, booking agencies, owners and managers of performing venues (e.g., theaters, night clubs, concert halls), personal managers, labor unions, publicity agencies, and a variety of miscellaneous services such as costume shops, magic supply stores, ticket agencies, and musical instrument repair services. In sum, they are the strangers in the social world of each entertainment form, and the tendency has been to study each separately. One exception to this rule is Rusted’s (1999) examination of an entire business firm, including agents, producers, performers, and orchestra leaders, the mission of which was to provide live Vaudeville-style entertainment for Fortune 500 clients. Another is Frith’s (2000) analysis of the entertainment functions of the mass media, which by focusing on its technology and appeal as leisure, he treats as a commodity rather than a form of communication. Meanwhile, some of these elements have, so far as I can tell, never been sociologically examined, while others have received disproportionate scrutiny.

The entertainment recording industry is, arguably, the most studied aspect of the world of entertainment. Furthermore, the diversity and fragmentation of sociological research on entertainment is nowhere as evident as in this area. Here, for instance, Marshall (2004) has looked at the effects of piracy on the music industry, as understood through the meanings people give to the material they steal. Boon, Greenfield, and Osborn (1996) compare the judicial and practical approaches of various kinds of musical contracts. Dowd (2004) examines the diversity of markets in the American recording industry as well as the advantages and disadvantages of concentration and decentralization there. Ryan and Peterson (1993) studied the occupational and organizational consequences of the

digital revolution in making and recording music. New devices such as samplers, sequencers, and synthesizers have not only altered contemporary music but have also shifted some of the power once enjoyed almost exclusively by larger corporations to smaller independent producers.

The Hollywood film industry has also been studied. Scott (2004) examined the favorable effects on television production of the concentration of supplies in the Hollywood area as well as the acceleration of decentralization of certain kinds of television production from that area. In a rare article on labor unions in entertainment, Ames (2001) analyzes the strategies used in a six-month, partially successful strike held in 2000 by members of the Screen Actors’ Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists in a dispute over the mode of payment for ongoing use of actors’ commercials.

The pornography industry has, quite possibly, been sociologically studied as much as any in entertainment. Most recently, Jacobs (2004) examined pornography on the Internet, how such material freely moves across national borders, and how users and artists visit and maintain peer-to-peer networks for producing and sharing sexually explicit films, photos, and literary material. Lane (2000:113) observed that female-owned Web pornographic sites constitute a significant trend, for it is easy for women to establish themselves as amateurs, bypassing expensive editors, producers, and the like. On a related note, Bruckert (2002:chaps. 3–6) provides detailed description of the stripping industry.

Last, but not the least, in the industrial sphere of entertainment is the critics. Shrum (1991) sampled reviews of Edinburgh’s Festival Fringe, to learn that reviews serve mostly to make entertainment visible. The evaluative function of reviews is taken seriously only at the high cultural level of dance, theater, symphony, and similar arts. Allen and Lincoln (2004) found that critical discourse about both a film and its director is a necessary condition for receiving retrospective cultural consecration, operationalized, among other ways, as receiving three or more Academy Award nominations or being selected as 1 of 10 best films of the year by either the *New York Times* or the National Board of Review. Baumann (2001) concluded that the intellectualizing discourse of the modern critic in the late 1950s and the 1960s helped change the audience’s perception of film.

## SOCIETY

This is an extremely eclectic area of the sociology of entertainment. For example, Dancis (1978) examined the relationship of punk rock to the political left. Punk, especially in Britain, directly addresses itself to social and economic problems of the working class, among them, its unemployed youth. Collins (2002) argues that television, with its enormous information base, now makes available to a mass audience information previously available only

to a few. On a different note, Carmeli (1991) studied a British circus, finding that the performer's family was the backbone of this traveling organization. A primary theme in Epstein's (1998) collection of papers on youth culture and identity is the way adolescents seek, through entertainment, both a collective and an individual sense of self. Greek and Thompson (1995) describe the battle against pornography in England and the United States, where for some segments of these nations, this form of deviant entertainment has become a major social issue.

A main area of the societal facet of entertainment is the effects of entertainment on individual and community. By no means is all this material sociological, however, since psychologists have long taken an interest in the ways entertainment influences personal beliefs, attitudes, and actions. Working from a sociological perspective, Andersen (1994) studied the link between televised, reality-based, crime programs and the urban war on drugs. He found the popular image that drug use is uniquely an urban, black problem erroneous, although it is an image that helps justify heavy police presence in black areas of American cities. Quayle and Taylor (2002) concluded that downloaded child pornography facilitates objectification of children, increasing the likelihood that, in the quest for new images, children will continue to be sexually abused. But Linz and Malamuth (1993:61) conclude that scholarly reviews of research on effects of pornography tend to reach conclusions consistent with one of three normative theories, which they labeled "conservative-moralist," "liberal," and "feminist." This calls into question the objectivity of these reviews and allied claims. Abt (1987) argues that, through videotape, the visual dimension adds significantly to the impact of rock music on its audiences (see also Bennett and Ferrell 1987). Clark (2004) sees the modern American city as an "entertainment machine," which, for officials in Chicago (one of the cities studied), includes hotels, tourism, conventions, restaurants, and related economic activities. Because it is a main part of the local economy, this machine can make, in its interest, many a social and political demand.

Another angle from which to view entertainment in society is from its historical base. Some fascinating historical accounts have been published, including Truzzi's (1968) history of the decline of the American three-ring circus. Gillett (1970) and later Ennis (1992) have written detailed histories of rock music in the United States, while Frith (1978) has done the same in Britain. Gillett ties his analysis to the urban nature of rock, while Ennis examines the evolution of this art from earlier forms of popular music. Peterson (1999) provides a fascinating history of country music and how it changed from being a folk art to being a commercially viable form of entertainment. Bufwack and Oermann (2003) trace the growing prominence of female singers in country music from 1800 to 2000.

## CONCLUSIONS

It could be argued that the sociology of entertainment is but a branch (a "sub-subdiscipline") of one or more of the recognized subdisciplines of the sociologies of art, work, leisure, and popular culture. After all, entertainers and their entertainment have found a notable place in each. Moreover, maintaining theoretical and empirical ties with each is important for further development of the sociology of entertainment (the reverse holds as well). The same may be said for its ties with related disciplines, particularly history, aesthetics, cultural studies, and communication studies.

None of this need be lost, however, when as has been done here, we treat the sociology of entertainment as a subdiscipline in its own right. Gained in this conceptualization is the arrangement that entertainers and entertainment may take their places at center stage as principal foci of inquiry. No danger here of being forced to play a minor part, as could happen when high art is regarded as superior to all art; casual leisure is defined as trivial when compared with work; and serious history is held to concentrate only on earth-shaking events such as wars, institutional change, and the rise and fall of great political leaders.

Another reason for considering the sociology of entertainment as a proper subdiscipline is to give it a fighting chance to avoid being regarded as "trivial." Sure, it is casual leisure for those who consume it, and the product consumed is only moderately complex. But casual leisure has its profound benefits (Stebbins 2001b), and the entertainment industry provides work for a significant proportion of the population while generating enormous economic returns for society. Furthermore, amateur entertainers and their local communities enjoy all the rewards and benefits (and some of the costs) that come with pursuing serious leisure. In short, the triviality label is a commonsense evaluation, not a scientific one. The social scientific study of entertainment has already demonstrated in countless ways just how profound entertainment and the entertainer roles actually are. Finally, there is a whiff of hypocrisy in the air when people qualify entertainment as trivial and, in the same breath, relish their hours before the television set and spend hard-earned money taking in live performances of their favorite pop stars.

Meanwhile, sociologists studying entertainment need to be more self-conscious about their subdiscipline. That is, they must place their studies of musicians, actors, content, history, and the like—the six facets—in distinctive, entertainment-related theoretic context, which certainly includes the new theory and sensitizing concepts presented earlier in this chapter. In the end, if unable to develop distinctive theory that organizes its central ideas, the sociology of entertainment will fail to make the claim that it is an identifiable subdiscipline. This is the most critical challenge facing sociologists who declare this area their specialty.



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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF FOOD AND EATING

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### WHETTING THE APPETITE: AN INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we explore the sociology of food and eating, one of the emerging subspecialties of sociology. We look at its roots in sociological history and its status as a still small but expanding subfield that intersects with other sociological specialties and with other disciplines. Food studies are by their nature interdisciplinary. Other fields have enriched sociological food studies; similarly, sociology has made unique conceptual and theoretical contributions to the food-related work of scholars in other disciplines. We introduce some core themes and questions that drive sociological research on food. Finally, we speculate on the future of this specialty: Does the sociology of food and eating have the potential to thrive as an independent subfield? The inclusion of this chapter in this volume suggests that sociology is making a place for the study of food systems and eating behaviors.

One difficulty in discussing the sociology of food and eating is that its identity as a subfield is recent, but sociologists' food studies are not. Over the years, food-related research has been done by rural, medical, and other sociologists. Recent works have been produced within the sociologies of culture, consumption, the body, and gender. To speak of a sociology of food and eating, then, entails appropriating for this subfield scholarship produced by

those who do not define themselves as “food sociologists” but who instead locate their work within other domains. Thus, the sociology of food and eating may seem a construct artificially created by “carving out” the food-related works of other subspecialties. We argue that since the 1980s a separate subfield has emerged, gradually taking its place alongside other areas within the discipline. Nevertheless, we face a practical problem: How can we describe this area without being drawn into describing other subfields (and, even worse, other disciplines) that have well-established food literatures? The answer, of course, is that we can't. What we attempt here is to highlight some core concerns of and theoretical influences on sociologists (and some nonsociologists) who study food, and we point the reader to other related areas, some of which are described in *21st Century Sociology: A Reference Handbook*.

This nascent field still seeks an identity—even what to call the specialty has been discussed over the years. John Bennett (1943) referred to a “sociology of diet” to describe studies by rural sociologists of the correlates and meanings of what people ate. This moniker seems not to have taken hold, and it would not describe most food studies by contemporary sociologists. The label we use, *the sociology of food and eating*, we owe to Anne Murcott (1983), who in 1983 published an edited volume of “exploratory and speculative” (p. 1) articles on the moral and structural

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implications of food. Some scholars emphasize a link to nutrition studies by referring to “the sociology of food and nutrition” and “nutritional sociology” (Germov and Williams 1999). Alex McIntosh (1996) has referred in the plural to “sociologies of food and nutrition,” acknowledging that food-related topics are studied sociologically from a variety of perspectives, while Alan Warde (1997) refers simply to “the sociology of food.” Recently, Murcott (1999, 2001) has argued that what is today called “the sociology of food” would more legitimately be called “the sociology of eating” for its emphasis on consumption and the “demand” side of the food system, and its relative neglect of the production or “supply” side. Nevertheless, for now, Murcott’s original emphasis on both food and eating seems the most appropriate way of describing this diverse field.

### FOOD AS GRIST FOR THE SOCIOLOGICAL MILL: A HISTORY

A decade ago, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson and Sharon Zukin (1995), pointing to the public’s growing fascination with food and cookbooks, celebrity chefs, dieting, and new modes of food production and distribution, asked,

Why is there no sociology of food? The material and symbolic richness of the subject suggests an infinite number of issues for sociologists’ conceptual menu. The provision and distribution of food, the divisions of labor surrounding food, the role of food rituals in creating solidarity, domesticity, and community—these should be meat and drink for sociology. Yet few sociologists have analyzed food in terms of systems of production or consumption, cultural products or cultural words, or social context. (P. 194)

Their question was being answered even as it was asked. More than a decade earlier, Murcott (1983) had compiled her edited book, *The Sociology of Food and Eating*, because she and others felt that “the sociological significance of food and eating is important” (p. vii). The same year that Ferguson and Zukin posed their question, Whit’s (1995) *Food and Society: A Sociological Approach* and Wood’s (1995) *The Sociology of the Meal* were published. These were followed in short order by McIntosh’s (1996) *Sociologies of Food and Nutrition*, Beardsworth and Keil’s (1997) *Sociology on the Menu*, Warde’s (1997) *Consumption, Food and Taste*, Germov and Williams’s (1999) *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition*, and Warde and Martens’s (2000) *Eating Out: Social Differentiation, Consumption, and Pleasure*. All touted the merits of studying food and eating sociologically, and most included accounts for sociology’s relative neglect of food when compared with other disciplines such as anthropology and history. Food had been “taken for granted” (Beardsworth and Keil 1997; McIntosh 1996), perhaps lacking a scholarly cachet due to its association with the mundane—home, family, and women’s domestic roles (Beardsworth and Keil

1997; Mennell 1999). Alan Beardsworth and Teresa Keil (1997:3) attributed sociology’s “coyness in relation to food and eating” to a perceived need to create a unique intellectual domain distanced from matters of physiology. The dearth of attention to food is apparent in Neil Smelser’s (1988) *Handbook of Sociology*, wherein rare references to food production and eating habits are scattered across chapters on labor, gender, family, and medical sociology. Warren Belasco (2002) linked the neglect of food to the effects of a nineteenth- and twentieth-century “technological utopianism” that envisioned a future of innovation where the synthesis of food pills created in gleaming laboratories and “automated factory farms” might free people from menial labor (p. 8). Such visions fostered an institutional bias that removed social scientists from contemplating the murky worlds of traditional food production, processing, and packaging. When food was studied, rarely was it the primary object of inquiry: “Rather than being the *end* focus, it tends to be a novel *means* to illuminate already accepted disciplinary concerns” (p. 6).

Of course, sociologists *hadn’t* completely neglected food and eating. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social theorists laid the groundwork for sociology by recognizing the significance of food as both an object of human activity and an indicator of the human condition. Friedrich Engels ([1845] 1969) connected workers’ food rations to their wages, with the lowest paid and unemployed subsisting on spoiled, often adulterated foods. Thorstein Veblen ([1899] 1953) noted that at the opposite end of the social spectrum, lavish foods served as objects of “conspicuous consumption,” displaying a high social standing. Conspicuous consumption was possible because of shared preferences throughout society specifying which items are most prestigious. Georg Simmel ([1915] 1991), contrasting the simple communal meal of farmworkers with the formal dinner of higher classes, saw the meal as an exemplar of the culture’s inevitable, pernicious movement from nature toward increasing formality and social order. The formal dinner, with its matching tableware and regimented manners, symbolized for Simmel a modern culture hostile to individual uniqueness despite its “cult of individuality.” The meal represented conformity: “The plate symbolizes order. . . . The plates on a dining table must all be identical; they cannot tolerate any individuality; different plates or glasses for different persons would be absolutely senseless and ugly” (Simmel [1915] 1991:348). These classical theorists recognized food and eating habits as inextricably tied to and indicative of a powerful societal structure.

Although there was no “sociology of food and eating” as such for most of the twentieth century, sociologists were studying food and eating in fields such as rural, medical, and family sociology. They addressed many issues that concern today’s scholars: eating habits, nutrition, hunger, the meanings of food in daily life. In rural sociology, for example, these interests were long-standing; rural sociologists began to examine food habits and means of

improving people's diets after World War I (Bennett, Smith, and Passin 1942). During the Great Depression, inequalities in food-abundant nations such as the United States left as many as one-third of citizens underfed (Taeuber 1948). Such concerns prompted studies assessing the nutrition and food preferences of rural dwellers (Bennett 1943; Bennett et al. 1942), contrasting them with the diets of urban dwellers (Leevy 1940). John Bennett (1943), for example, showed that the impoverished residents of a rural "riverbottom area" disparaged certain foods for their associations with lower-status groups and desired the processed "urban foods" that indicated higher status and upward mobility. Global food adequacy was of concern as well, especially after World War II. Conrad Taeuber (1948:653), a demographer trained in rural sociology, described the sociological challenges faced by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), whose mission included improving global nutrition, the efficiency of food production and distribution, and rural living conditions. Taeuber saw sociologists playing a vital role in helping the FAO to understand the social factors that affected hunger: Local customs and religious practices could prevent acceptance of certain foods. Agricultural improvements must be suited to the social environments into which they were introduced, or they would fail. Improved nutrition could reduce mortality but also foster population increase. In some places, a better food supply would spur industrialization and alter patterns of farming and land tenure. Today, rural sociologists tackle these and other, new problems. For example, public concerns aroused by the expanding use of genetically modified foods, by heavily publicized waves of food-borne illness, and by conflicting messages regarding health and nutrition have prompted rural sociologists to examine public perceptions of food safety and risks (e.g., Knight and Warland 2005). Rural sociologists continue to look at local agricultural development as well as global food systems. As the sociology of food develops as a subfield, we expect that research from specialties such as rural sociology will continue to yield important insights into the role of food in society.

Food preparation and consumption have long provided sociologists with opportunities to gain insights into modes of production, political rule, rural development, social health issues, discourse and language, image and class, race and gender, family structure and function, intergenerational relations, and regional differences. There is probably no field of sociological endeavor that could not address aspects of food or eating in some fashion or to some benefit.

Take, for example, the many ethnographies of the restaurant, a rich milieu for examining such diverse topics as power relationships, the building of community, and identity construction. William Foote Whyte (1948) described interactions and status relations among restaurant workers and customers in an expanding, increasingly complex food service industry. Joanne Finkelstein (1989, 1998) analyzed dining behavior in restaurants using the

symbolic interactionist framework of Erving Goffman. "The restaurant," she argued, "marks the convergence of the personal and the social, the private and the public" (Finkelstein 1998:203). There, a kind of exhibitionism takes place, "where the influences of social pretensions, guile, and the dictates of fashion have been strongly in evidence" (p. 203). Restaurant behavior connects dining out with false conceptions—and false presentations—of the self. A more benign representation of eating and drinking establishments is found in Ray Oldenburg's (1989) work; he sees them as "third places" occupying a realm between public and private spheres. In such contexts, home-style familiarity and informal interaction coexist with the excitement of seeing and being seen. As a "third place," a coffee shop or restaurant might nourish not only the body but also feed a sense of community spirit and pride of place. Gary Allen Fine's (1996) analysis of the occupational rhetoric of chefs in upscale restaurants showed how chefs use the languages of professionalism, art, business, and labor to claim prestige and maintain a sense of self-worth in an occupation of ambiguous status—cook, manager, artist—in the public's mind. Jennifer Parker Talwar (2002) described the fast-food restaurant as a venue in which immigrants adapt to American culture while simultaneously shaping the local operations of what are often global corporations. These diverse studies demonstrate the versatility of food-related topics for exploring sociological ideas.

Still, despite the usefulness of food in social inquiry, sociological research on food was scattershot at best for many decades. Alan Warde and Lydia Martens (2000), commenting on the history of this research, observed that

for a sociologist, the field consisted of a stuttering debate on the nature of the proper meal and its role in domestic organization . . . , [and] a few occasional essays on exceptional behaviour like vegetarianism, health food shopping and children's sweets. (P. 1)

That began to change in the 1980s, when a few works on food and eating practices appeared. Anne Murcott (1983) laid out fundamental questions still addressed by today's food sociologists: What are the moral and symbolic meanings of food, and how are food and eating related to hierarchies of class, age, and gender? Stephen Mennell (1985) drew on Elias's ([1939] 1978) work to trace the "civilizing of appetite" in England and France since the Middle Ages. Joanne Finkelstein (1989) explored eating out as a form of entertainment that, by turning emotions into commodities, allowed people to purchase and present images of self.

It was during the 1990s that a critical mass of interest stimulated development of a sociological specialty in food and eating—but why? First and foremost, significant changes in the food system, from production to consumption, and growing public enthusiasm for new foods, celebrity chefs, cookbooks, and high-end kitchens may have altered the academic climate regarding food studies.

Increasing student demand for courses on food and society may have provided a practical rationale for sociology and other departments to add food-related courses to their curricula.

Consider the changing food system. In developed nations, food choice abounds. In the United States, global marketing of foodstuffs has exposed us to an array of food products from foreign sources. The seasonality of fruits and vegetables has nearly vanished as supermarkets tap into the bounties of producer nations in both hemispheres (Regmi 2002:1). As food manufacturers strive to maintain competitiveness, they expand product lines by developing variations on their products, increasing “assortment depth” at the supermarket (Stassen and Waller 2002). Consequently, the number of discrete products or stock keeping units available in a typical American supermarket, estimated to be about 14,000 in 1980, is now more than 40,000 (Kaufman 2002). Consumers thus have far more choice, perhaps at the expense of confusion and increased time needed for shopping (Nelson 2001).

Shifting gender roles, especially women’s entry into the labor force, have altered patterns of food purchasing, preparation, and consumption. Increases in discretionary income, coupled with reduced time at home, have contributed to more eating out. Two-paycheck households spend at least 45 percent more on food eaten away from home than do single-paycheck households (National Restaurant Association 2005b). In 1955, only 25 percent of each American food dollar was spent on restaurant food; in 2005 that figure is at least 47 percent (National Restaurant Association 2005a). Fast food accounts for most growth in eating out (Price 2002:35), and the industry has significantly altered food production and consumption patterns (Schlosser 2001). Eating out has had consequences for the grocery business: To win back customers lost to restaurants and take-out food, supermarkets have increased the availability of “home meal replacements.” In just one year, 1999, sales of these fully prepared meal items rose 3 percent (Price 2002:40).

But, alongside this abundance, consider too the statistics on food security and hunger. Hunger has not yet been eliminated in the United States, although food insufficiency is low (estimated at less than 3 percent) and usually transitory (Ribar and Hamrick 2003:iii). Although many populations (especially in Asia, most of Latin America, and the Caribbean) are experiencing increasing levels of food security (Shapouri and Rosen 2004:iii), large Third World populations—just over 900 million in 2003—faced at least short-term food insufficiency. In places such as sub-Saharan Africa, bad weather, drought, political conflict, and the spread of HIV/AIDS contribute to poverty, economic stagnation, and food insecurity (Rosen 2003:14). These conditions raise questions about the politics of food distribution, the social consequences of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, and the use of biotechnological “fixes” to solve problems of hunger and dietary insufficiencies that are attributable, in part, to social and political

causes (Nestle 2003). While short-term hunger may be remedied with food aid, the social causes and consequences of long-term food insecurity pose deeper challenges (Jenkins and Scanlan 2001; Nestle 2002).

Other changes in the food system may have sparked academic interest as well. The 1980s and 1990s brought rapid expansion of American fast-food corporations into new markets in Asia and elsewhere, generating questions about cultural change and dilution of local food habits (Watson 2002). Innovations such as genetically modified (GM) foods have not fulfilled the promise of eliminating diseases caused by dietary deficiency. While GM foods are widely grown and used in the United States, they are far less trusted in Europe and parts of Africa, where both the public and politicians question the long-term safety of these products on health, environmental, or economic grounds and the financial motivations of the agribusiness giants who developed them (Nestle 2003). In Europe, and to a lesser extent the United States, food scares in the 1990s, such as “mad cow disease,” raised public concerns regarding food safety (Atkins and Bowler 2001). As the production of food has become less local and more industrialized, some food-borne pathogens (such as *E. coli* 0157:H7) have increased despite overall improvements in safety (Fox 1997; Schlosser 2001). Sensationalized media stories feed public fears about the food they eat (Miller and Reilly 1995; Reilly and Miller 1997). Other health concerns, particularly over obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, have arisen because processed and fast foods—typically higher in fats and sugars—have become central to our increasingly “supersized” diets (Brownell and Horgen 2004; Critser 2003). Moral and ethical concerns have motivated greater attention if not adherence to vegetarianism (Maurer 2002).

Food system changes have become grist for the sociological mill, providing new opportunities for the application and expansion of sociological theories and methods. But the 1990s also brought changes in the academic climate, fostering greater interest in and legitimacy for food studies in sociology and other disciplines. Stephen Mennell, Anne Murcott, and Anneke van Otterloo (1992:5) suggest several such changes: (1) heightened awareness of nutritional problems worldwide; (2) the professionalization of nutrition and dietetics; and (3) a growing interest in the sociology of culture. The intersection of fast-growing sociologies of culture, of consumption, and of the body has become a nexus for theoretical discussion (Germov and Williams 1999), for example, in studies of the stigmatization of obesity.

Finally, student demands for food and society courses have fostered academic interest, with both undergraduate and graduate courses “oversubscribed” (Watson and Caldwell 2005:1). Jeffery Sobal, Alex McIntosh, and William Whit (1993) have discussed the contexts in which sociologists teach about food. In sociology departments, eating and nutrition provide examples whereby sociological principles can be taught, whereas in nutrition

departments and professional schools, sociologists are called on to provide means of interpreting nutrition- and health-related behaviors. There is no simple way of estimating the number of food courses in sociology departments, but the availability of teaching resources for them has grown since 1990, when Whit and Lockwood (1990) compiled a teaching guide that included 16 syllabi, four from sociology programs. Today, one online syllabus set (Deutsch 2003) contains more than 70 syllabi spanning a dozen disciplines. The American Sociological Association recently sponsored compilation of a sociology of food teaching manual (Copelton and Lucal 2005), suggesting that food-related courses are becoming mainstream in sociology.

The development of the sociology of food and eating was aided by the nearly simultaneous publication in the mid- to late-1990s of several texts on the subject. These works, although varying in emphasis, reflected some consensus regarding the core concerns of the field: food production and distribution systems, food consumption patterns as linked to social differentiation and/or stratification, food as a significant cultural object, health/nutrition, hunger and food security (global and local), and the perceived body (body image, disorders of eating and identity, and stigmatization processes). We believe that these texts were significant in defining the subfield in the United States, especially because relatively little food-related research appeared in major American sociology journals in the 1990s.

William Whit's (1995) *Food and Society: A Sociological Approach*, a "self-consciously sociological approach" (p. xii) to the study of food and society, drew on multidisciplinary sources to introduce readers to basic nutrition, body size issues, food production and distribution, cultural differences in food choice, stratification and hunger, and agricultural technology. Whit's (1995) book, unlike most textbooks, revealed an activist orientation, critiquing "profit-driven [agricultural] oligopolies" (p. 189) while advocating vegetarianism and organic farming techniques.

Alex McIntosh's (1996) more theoretically oriented *Sociologies of Food and Nutrition* argued that sociologists could examine food as a catalyst for forming or breaking social relationships, and for linking the individual and the cultural, the physical and the symbolic. Studying food could enhance theory development; the title reference to *sociologies* conveys McIntosh's view that food and nutrition should be examined from different theoretical stances. He proposed that we think of a sociology *in* nutrition and a sociology *of* nutrition (pp. 10–13). The former would address social epidemiology: the social factors that affect diet-related health conditions and their consequences. The latter would study the social organizations, policies, and practices that characterize the fields of dietetics and nutrition, and the linkages of these fields to consumers, medical professionals, and the food industry, for example. However conceptually appealing this distinction may have seemed

in 1996, it fails to convey the breadth of topics McIntosh covered even at that time, among them consumerism, the food-related activities of organizations ranging from families to farms to transnationals, food and social stratification at both the micro and macro levels, the body, famine, social change, and the role of the state in food policy and provision. A decade later, what we refer to as the sociology of food and eating is even more expansive, and while there may now indeed be *sociologies* of food, the nutritional emphasis apparent in McIntosh's text is but one aspect of today's food studies within sociology. Nevertheless, *Sociologies of Food and Nutrition* showed the promise of a nascent subfield as a vehicle for the acquisition and application of knowledge and for theory development.

Alan Beardsworth and Teresa Keil (1997) put forth two themes in their textbook *Sociology on the Menu*: (1) social change and the human diet and (2) our ambivalence about both our foods and our bodies. Like McIntosh, they advocated the development of a sociology of food that could contribute to theory development and to a broader understanding of social organizations and processes. A more explicitly nutrition-oriented text was the collection *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition: The Social Appetite* (Germov and Williams 1999). John Germov (a sociologist) and Lauren Williams (a nutritionist) structured the book around three trends figuring prominently in sociology: (1) McDonaldization (a rationalized organizational model, taken to high levels in the fast-food industry, that characterizes many contemporary businesses and social institutions [Ritzer 1993]); (2) social differentiation (with food as an indicator of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and their intersections); and (3) self-rationalization (here, analyses of cultural and personal discourses on nutrition and the body, for example, the stigmatization of obesity).

Other signs of the area's emergence are found in the professional associations established to support research and practice related to food. The British Sociological Association established a Food Study Group in 1994 (BSA 2005), and the International Sociological Association formed a "thematic group" on famine and society in 1988 (ISA 2005). Progress in the United States was slower: the American Sociological Association has as yet no section on the sociology of food and eating, although the association's annual meeting has featured several food sessions since 1998. The paucity of food-focused sessions may reflect the fact that food-related presentations are dispersed across sessions on culture, consumption, medical sociology, rural sociology, and other topics. Food studies are more likely to be presented at meetings of specialized organizations, such as the Rural Sociological Society, or at interdisciplinary meetings. Indeed, the development of interdisciplinary food and society organizations may have inhibited the development of a presence for the sociology of food and eating within the American Sociological Association.

## JUST ADD SOCIOLOGY AND STIR: INTERDISCIPLINARY FOOD STUDIES

What is clear from the last decade's attempts to define a sociology of food and eating is that this subfield would not be, *could not* be, a purely sociological endeavor. The study of food and society is inherently interdisciplinary as food touches nearly every corner of human existence. Scholarship on food and eating appears in the literatures of anthropology, history, economics, geography, marketing, nutrition science, philosophy, political science, psychology, and public health. That sociologists routinely draw on these literatures is apparent in both their research citations and their reading lists for food and society courses, where we commonly find the scholarship of anthropology (e.g., Douglas 1972; Goody 1982; Harris 1985; Lévi-Strauss [1964] 1969; Mintz 1985), history (e.g., Gabaccia 2000; Levenstein 1988, 1993), cultural studies (e.g., Barthes [1957] 1972; Lupton 1996), American studies (e.g., Belasco 1993), geography (e.g., Bell and Valentine 1997; Shortridge and Shortridge 1998), philosophy (e.g., Curtin and Heldke 1992), and journalism (e.g., Pollan 2002, 2003; Schlosser 2001; Sokolov 1991).

Each discipline provides insights that add to a more comprehensive view of this broad-ranging subject, filling gaps or lack of attention in other fields. Ben Fine, Michael Heasman, and Judith Wright (1996) contend that the complexity of the food system requires cross-fertilizations among a number of disciplines. Anne Murcott (2001) argues that an undue emphasis on consumption by food sociologists has left some poorly equipped to deal with issues of production, where researchers in other specialties may be more knowledgeable. Even if food sociologists are not preoccupied with consumption, there still are good reasons for those studying food to call on the scholarship of other disciplines. Other fields examine objects and phenomena that would typically be beyond the purview of sociology. A culinary historian such as Phyllis Pray Bober (1999), using archaeological methods, can delve into the diets of prehistory, or, using the earliest documentary sources, the cuisines of antiquity, providing points of comparison for sociological analyses of today's eating practices. Moreover, work in other disciplines often parallels research in sociology. Anthropologist Jack Goody (1982) refers to his work on the political economy of food production and consumption as "sociological." Geographers, whose work sometimes overlaps that of rural sociologists (Murcott 2001), call attention to the importance of place, region, and immigration in ways familiar to sociologists. For example, Gill Valentine's (1999) work on "eating in" advances our understanding of the complex relationship between identity construction and the home by exploring food consumption and the spatial dynamics of cooking and eating.

For sociologists, interdisciplinary connections also foster professional development. Given the still low profile of food studies within sociology, food sociologists have found

interdisciplinary organizations to be ideal venues for socialization and presentation of food-oriented research. The Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, organized in 1987 by members of several disciplines (among them sociologists), promotes cross-disciplinary work on agriculture and food (Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society 2005). The Association for the Study of Food and Society, founded about the same time by sociologists and others interested in agricultural and nutritional issues (Whit 1999), now claims member affiliations with 23 disciplines (Association for the Study of Food and Society 2005). The joint meeting of these two organizations draws practitioners from the social sciences, humanities, health/nutrition sciences, marketing, and culinary arts. Other venues for presentation are the Popular Culture Association-American Culture Association meeting and meetings of regional culture associations. Interdisciplinary journals (among them *Food and Foodways*; *Gastronomica*; *Food, Culture, and Society*; and *The Journal of Popular Culture*) publish sociologically oriented food studies.

## KEY INGREDIENTS: CONCEPTS AND THEMES IN FOOD STUDIES

At present, there is no "food theory" per se. Rather, food sociologists draw on theoretical perspectives and concepts drawn from other specialties within and outside sociology. Although the authors of these ideas may not be identified with food studies, use of their work connects the sociology of food and eating to a tradition of sociological thought.

### Three Paradigms

Stephen Mennell and his associates (1992) identified three fundamental paradigms in the analysis of food and eating: structuralism, represented in the works of Lévi-Strauss ([1964] 1969) and Douglas (1972, 1984); cultural materialism, as presented by Harris (1979, 1985); and the developmental approach, Mennell's (1985) application of Elias's ([1939] 1978) notion of the "civilizing process." Although influential, these approaches have not become core paradigms—food studies have branched too widely, beyond their domains. Nevertheless, the insights these paradigms provided encouraged scholars to think about food as significant in human society and to contemplate why peoples vary in their choices and in the symbolic loadings they give to their eating practices.

#### *Structuralism*

In *The Raw and the Cooked*, Claude Lévi-Strauss ([1964] 1969) conceived of a "culinary triangle" of three categories of food: the cooked, the raw, and the rotten. Whereas the passage from either raw or cooked to rotten is a natural process, the transformation from raw to cooked is a *cultural* one; the juxtaposition of raw and cooked represents the

binary opposition of nature and culture. Analyzing food as a kind of language by exploring cultures' conceptual categories for food classification, as well as their customs and rules for food preparation, is a means by which Lévi-Strauss sought to understand universally shared structures of human cognition. Mary Douglas (1972, 1984), arguably the most influential structuralist author on food, similarly conceived of meals as systems of decipherable codes that reflect classifications within the larger culture. "If food is treated as a code," she wrote, "the messages it encodes will be found in the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries" (Douglas 1972:61). This code expresses multiple meanings in a highly ritualized, yet taken-for-granted "pattern of social relationships" (p. 61). Unlike Lévi-Strauss, Douglas did not see food as revealing *universal* patterns, but for both theorists, food revealed underlying structures and meanings of cultural significance.

### *Cultural Materialism*

Marvin Harris (1979, 1985) challenged the view that eating patterns are to be read for the broader codes they reveal by approaching food choice as a matter of efficiency and functionality. Thus, Americans and Europeans choose not to eat bugs and other "small things" not because they are inherently disgusting but because these people have more efficient sources of protein in the form of small mammals and fish. In other parts of the world, small things are relished as food, in part because of the dearth of other accessible forms of protein but also because the small things available are often larger or more efficient food sources—swarmed insects, for example, or large insects and grubs. Similarly, Harris (1985) explained the Hindu reverence for the sacred cow and the Semitic disdain for pig-eating by calling attention to the environmental roles played by these animals as well as to the social implications of their use by humans.

### *The Developmental Approach*

Stephen Mennell's developmental approach derives primarily from Norbert Elias's ([1939] 1978) concept of "civilizing process." Elias articulated a gradual yet extensive civilizing process that occurred in Western societies over several centuries. One of its effects was a shift from the exercise of external constraints on individuals toward the internalized constraints that individuals exercise on themselves, resulting in greater self-discipline and self-control. Mennell extended Elias's theory of civilizing process explicitly to food, arguing that a "civilizing appetite" reflects a gradual increase in self-control over appetite. Thus, we see a shift in emphasis from quantity to quality in the cuisine of the European upper classes during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Earlier, feasting had been a sign of wealth, but gradually, elegance and

refinement came to be represented by the delicacy of the food eaten and the moderation of appetite.

## **The Culture Industry**

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno ([1944] 2002) have used the notion of "culture industry" in analyzing the spread of mass culture and the commodification of cultural standards. Their culture industry thesis highlights the growing sameness of cultural practices globally. With standardization, people become passive consumers: Millions buy fast food daily without considering where this food came from and how it was made. Eric Schlosser's (2001) description of a ubiquitous American fast-food scene echoes Horkheimer and Adorno's prediction of an "interchangeable sameness" resulting from mass production. The ambience of the fast food restaurant—the "rush of cold air . . . the backlit color photographs above the counter" (p. 3)—has become ordinary: "The whole experience of buying fast food has become so routine, so thoroughly unexceptional and mundane, that it is now taken for granted" (p. 3). That routine experience has become global, "helping to create a homogenized international culture" (p. 229). Standardization pervades all aspects of the fast-food industry, affecting employers, employees, and consumers. Employer-mandated scripted interactions at the fast-food counter convey the illusion of quality service to the customer while allowing employees to maintain a social distance and impersonality (Leidner 1993). Yi-Chi Chen and Monina Wang (2002) observe that a McDonald's outlet is identifiable by its standards of service and product, its standard greetings and smiles. The floor plan and food ingredients are calculated and standardized to promote efficient preparation. Both crew and customers are socialized in now-standard consumption behavior: Queue up to order, take the food to the table, and clean up before leaving. Standardization thus embodies a form of control that can be measured and monitored to achieve stability and universality.

## **McDonaldization**

Such analyses evoke George Ritzer's (1993) widely cited work on "McDonaldization," in which the fast-food industry becomes both the model of and metaphor for contemporary organizational behavior. Describing the rationalization of the fast-food industry, Ritzer shows how predictability (of product, of behavior), calculability (of time, of quantity), efficiency (of food preparation, of service), and control (of managers, workers, and consumers) have enabled the fast-food industry to expand and profit, becoming a model for other organizations and institutions in contemporary society.

The homogenization that accompanied the transition to a global mass culture has given rise to fears that local food-stuffs, flavors, and culinary practices may vanish. The Slow Food Movement, founded by Carlo Petrini in 1986,

challenged the core principles of McDonaldization by promoting the preservation of regional agricultural diversity and the celebration of the sensual “pleasures of the table” (Slow Food USA 2005). The backlash to McDonaldization is at times more directly confrontational—French farm activists gained worldwide publicity in 1999 when they protested the industrialization of food by demolishing a new McDonald’s outlet with tractors (Frost 2002).

## Habitus

The food literature in sociology frequently cites Pierre Bourdieu’s ([1979] 1984) notion of “habitus,” internalized structures that shape individuals’ actions without necessary reference to the beliefs or awareness of the individuals who have internalized them. The concept is attractive to social scientists who analyze concrete details of everyday life or lifestyle—attire, manners, eating practices, and the like—to trace how an ideology may be specifically and practically implemented, even without the conscious awareness of the actor. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu ([1979] 1984) describes “taste” as a means whereby class distinctions are reproduced and reinforced. An individual internalizes attitudes, preferences, habits of behavior that represent his class. Food and eating habits, structured by class-related opportunities, are fundamental manifestations of each class’s taste. So, for example, without an individual’s awareness, his choices (of foods, of restaurants), his behaviors (his bodily carriage and manners at the table), and his attitudes (toward others’ choices, manners, and lifestyles) all reproduce the ideologies of class he has internalized. Such distinctions, however, may vary across societies: Michele Lamont (1992) found that the Americans were less prone to making such differentiations than were Bourdieu’s French.

## The Reflexive Project of the Self

According to Anthony Giddens (1991), people in modern society face the burden as well as the liberation of constructing their own identities in a process he refers to as “the reflexive project of the self” (p. 52). He writes, “The question ‘How shall I live?’ has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear and what to eat” (p. 14). In traditional society, making choices about living—about how to be and how to act—is relatively straightforward. In postmodern society, it is complex, stressful, and risky because information is fragmented and diverse: “Taking charge of one’s life involves risk, because it means confronting a diversity of open possibilities” (p. 73). Barry Smart (1994) addresses the anxiety of postmodern eating practices. Contemporary eating experiences look like fragmented snapshots—people nibble in the cafeteria, and wander, overwhelmed, past myriad food items arrayed up and down megamarket aisles. Choosing the foodstuffs and recipes they should use is difficult. Glossy

cookbooks and the televised cooking demonstrations of celebrity chefs project images of what people can become, yet the expectations of gratification that they inspire are never quite realized by the individual (p. 171). Glossy cookbooks are “gastro-porn” (p. 170), pleasurable to look at, yet unattainable in reality. The result is “panic eating,” an “orgy of gastroglobaleclecticism” (p. 175), emblematic of what Giddens described as the double edge—burden and liberation—of taking charge of one’s life.

## Social Contextual Factors in Eating Practices

Eating practices encompass the context and atmosphere of a meal: the total experience of what and where we eat, how we begin each meal, what we eat with, and with whom we eat. Thus, these practices involve a package of culturally, socially, and historically contextualized experiences. The sociological study of food and eating contributes to a fuller picture of this context-specific experience. Rick Fantasia (1995) argues that contexts can change the meanings of eating. Studying fast food in France, he observes that the highly centralized, rigidly standardized operation of McDonald’s is viewed by younger generations as the organizational embodiment of democracy, individualism, and free enterprise (p. 209), a message they embrace to reject the stuffiness and rigidity of French tradition. Fantasia considers “the emergence of the fast food experience in France to be culturally and socially decontextualized” (p. 235). Different meanings emerge in different contexts.

Another sociological study of context—here, time rather than geographic space—appears in Joseph Gusfield’s (1992) comparison of natural food movements in the 1830s and 1950s. While both movements rejected social controls and institutions, the meanings of their messages diverge due to the contexts in which each movement arose. In the 1830s, the natural food movement saw eating practices as a means of reconnecting with the “moral authority” inherent in nature. By comparison, in the 1950s and later, nature was no longer perceived as a source of moral authority. Instead, a return to natural eating represented a countercultural rejection of a technological, commercialized society.

## The Interplay between the Global and the Local

Food can reveal dramatic social change. Issues raised at the turn of the twenty-first century—globalization, antiglobal reactions, and the rebirth of nationalism—have created an explosion in food studies, motivating research on, for example, the globalization of food-delivery systems, most notably those associated with the fast-food industry (Belasco 1989; Bloomfield 1994; Reiter 1991; Royle and Towers 2002). Blurring of the boundaries between national, regional, and ethnic identities has prompted studies capturing the effects of globalization and the complexity of the global-local nexus.



Richard Wilk (1999) examines whether globalization erases local tradition in Belize, where there “has been an unusually global society, with open borders, a mobile population, and close connections with international commerce” (p. 69). In this context, one would not expect to find a national cuisine. Yet globalization, via tourism, has encouraged the creation of local culinary traditions. Wilk found that “Belizeans of different ethnic groups have forged a remarkable degree of consensus on what they like to eat and how it should be prepared” (p. 86). The connection between global and local can also be seen in themes of the other in the context of colonialism. Uma Narayan (1997) describes how the colonial British imported curry from India and how they “naturalized and nationalized” it (p. 163), thus “inventing” today’s Western curry powder. Indian kitchens and groceries have no “curry powder.” What Indians buy or make are *masalas*, different mixtures of ground spices used to season a variety of dishes; *curry* in vegetarian South India refers to a quite different spicing of vegetables and rice (p. 164). Narayan attributes the invention of curry powder to a British desire to “domesticate” Indian culture and erase the dangers associated with the Indian other.

### Food and Identity

Food is a vehicle, symbolic and material, for negotiating and constructing a sense of who we are. People’s practices around food unfold in a multiplicity of social spaces, each having implications for identity. A large literature examines how eating practices articulate identities: national (e.g., Ohnuki-Tierney 1993; Pilcher 1996; Tam 1997), regional (e.g., Bahloul 1995; Fuller 1995; Toombs 1993), ethnic (e.g., Brown and Mussell 1984; Caglar 1995; Ray 2004), and gender (e.g., Beoku-Betts 1995; Brown and Jasper 1993; Counihan 1988). These studies detail how certain foods and rituals become powerful symbols in the construction of systems of shared meanings. Socially constructed meanings around food, these authors argue, serve to mark boundaries between genders, life-cycle stages, social classes, occupations, religions, geographical regions, racial and ethnic groups, and nations.

Cookbooks are an important medium for the construction of identity. Arjun Appadurai (1988) studies the creation through cookbooks of a national cuisine in contemporary India. He found that middle-class women across the subcontinent communicated with one another through the medium of cookbooks, blurring regional, ethnic, and caste boundaries and thereby fostering a sense of Indian national identity. Appadurai shows how people turn foods into powerful symbols of group affinity. Similarly, Rafia Zafar (1999) examines the creation of cookbooks by African American women as a means of establishing a voice and identity in a situation of internal colonialism. As these women write about certain foods, they recall specific sites. Thus, for Gullah women, writing prompts the awakening of a historical consciousness in which tradition is

creatively reimagined, leading to self-affirmation and self-creation.

### Food and the Social Construction of Everyday Life

Michel de Certeau (1984) focuses on how ordinary people *use* everyday objects and spaces. In doing so, he reveals the creativity in everyday routines of cooking, eating, and grocery shopping. Without denying the weight of social structures, de Certeau argues that people practice an “art of living” in everyday life. His theory of a practice of everyday life invites food scholars to reexamine the often trivialized and overlooked daily routines of life. Thus Marjorie DeVault (1991) explores the implications of “feeding the family” from the perspective of those who do that work. From interviews conducted in a diverse group of American households, DeVault reveals the extensive effort and skill behind the “invisible” work of shopping, cooking, and serving meals. Elisabeth Fürst (1997), interviewing Swedish housewives, found that daily home cooking expresses feminine identities and rationality. Compared with other housework, experienced as dull and routine, “cooking carries positive potentials” (p. 441). Similarly, Sherrie Inness’s (2001) collection, *Cooking Lessons*, reveals cooking to be a source of women’s power and influence in their households and communities. Inness notes, “For women without access to other forms of creative expression, preparing a superior cake or batch of fried chicken has been a way to display their talent in an acceptable venue” (p. xi). Mary Gatta (2002) explores everyday practices in restaurant settings from diners to fancy restaurants. Drawing on Goffman (1959) but attending also to emotional elements she sees lacking in his work, she uses a “stage” metaphor to examine the strategies and narratives used by food servers to construct and maintain identity, especially gender identity.

### Production . . . Consumption: From “Versus” to “And”

In the mid-1990s, sociologists and other social scientists shifted their focus from production to consumption as the dominant contemporary cultural force in political, economic, and social life. From this stance, patterns of food consumption could indicate changes in local, national, and global contexts as clearly as patterns of food production would. Anne Murcott (2001) contends this shift may have gone too far: “An undue preoccupation with eating, intake, diet, and cuisines—the demand side—has developed detached from corresponding examination of the logic, imperatives, and organizations of supply” (p. 10).

Increasingly, however, food scholars look for connections between production and consumption. For instance, Purnima Mankekar (2002) illustrates how specific local consumption is contextualized within the global form. She vibrantly describes Indian grocery stores in the San

Francisco Bay Area, their commodities—produced in the United States, India, or elsewhere—displayed to evoke, here, the American supermarket, and there, a regional Indian market. The shopper is enmeshed in transnationality, aware at one time of her two national identities, Indian and American. Melissa Caldwell's (2002) ethnographic study of food consumption practices in Moscow links personal eating experiences to broader political issues, such as growing nationalist sentiments in the context of a globalizing Russia.

Linking consumption and production is advocated by Ben Fine (2002) in his critique of the literature on eating disorders, which tends, he argues, to overemphasize individual consumption, especially among women. Left unaddressed is the relationship between these disorders and the conditions of production: "Compulsions to eat and to diet are heavily created and conditioned by the economics of food. Both eating and dieting are fed by huge industries, seeking to expand in whatever way possible" (p. 223). Our food system encourages overconsumption and then sells us foods to help us diet. To understand consumption, Fine argues, we must link it to production.

### Postmodernism and Eating Practices in Popular Culture

Postmodernism is associated with change: industrial and technological change, expanding consumerism, altered patterns of domestic and paid labor for women, shifting immigration patterns, increasing affluence, and new leisure activities for larger numbers of people. With these changes have come alterations in food practices as people travel and eat out more, peruse the photographic art of food stylists in cookbooks and magazine ads, and consume foods enhanced by food chemists and nutritionists. The popular culture is infused with food: food writing proliferates in newspapers and on the Web, cooking shows and "food travelogues" fill television airtime, and food services penetrate into nearly every leisure site—theaters and galleries, cinemas, shopping malls, stadiums, and airports. Even grocery shopping has become recreational. Food is woven into the construction of lifestyles, expanding its role as a marker of social position.

From the debates over postmodernism, food, and popular culture, some themes have emerged. Steve Redhead (1995) argues that a global popular-culture industry has developed, incorporating formerly disparate areas of leisure and pleasure. As eating becomes a leisure activity (Wood 1992), people sample other cultures through their foods, giving rise to notions of a "global kitchen" (Cook 1995; Cook and Crang 1996) and "kitchen table tourism" (Turgeon and Pastinelli 2002). Food media are instrumental in this sampling, with food writers, critics, and celebrity chefs counseling us on cooking techniques, ingredients, and menus of other cultures. The global meets the local via television and cookbooks, and an at-home culinary tourism begins (Long 1998, 2004), often divorced from a sense of

the cultural context through which food sampling might yield cultural understanding (hooks 1998). Such "food adventuring" (Heldke 2003) reflects a quest for the unusual and exotic, exposing colonialist attitudes embedded in our everyday relationship with foreign foods.

### Food and the Body

Concerns about the human body, particularly its size, are a point of intersection for the sociologies of food, health, culture, and gender. Historically, studies of obesity and eating disorders had been the domain of medical professionals and nutritionists, who linked eating disorders primarily to psychological conditions such as depression (Maurer and Sobal 1995). The "pathology" of obesity was treated with drugs, surgery, and counseling (Joanisse and Synnott 1999; Sobal 1995), and the obese were often blamed for failure to curtail food intake (Parham 1999). Little was made of the fact that the vast majority of people diagnosed with eating disorders were women (Way 1995). Hilde Bruch, renowned for her work on anorexia, saw in this condition a struggle to ward off adulthood, without recognizing that it was *womanhood* her patients were resisting (Chernin 1981). By the 1980s, feminist scholars and social scientists challenged the medicalization of obesity and eating disorders by calling attention to an oppressive "thin ideal" to which women in particular were held (Way 1995). Many women "were in a perpetual state of 'disordered eating'" (Germov and Williams 1996:631), dissatisfied with their own bodies (Haworth-Hoepfner 1999). By the 1990s, sociologists advanced a number of themes: the "contemporary cult of slimness" (Beardsworth and Keil 1997:175), the stigmatization of the obese (and to a lesser extent, the underweight), weight-related identities, and the role of social organizations and "experts" in shaping social discourse on the body.

The sociological insights of Erving Goffman (1963) figure prominently in discussions of the stigmatization of the obese. Douglas Degher and Gerald Hughes (1999) describe the "spoiled identity" of the fat person and the information management techniques the obese use to deal with stigmatization. Gina Cordell and Carol Ronai (1999) identify strategies of "narrative resistance" used by overweight women to counter stigmatizing stereotypes. Karen Honeycutt (1999) found that whether women dieted, accepted their size, or joined fat-acceptance groups, most stigmatized obesity as unattractive and monitored the weights of other people. At the other end of the weight issue, Donna Maurer's (1999) dramaturgical analysis of vegetarian organizations shows how leaders try aggressively to counter the negative association of meat avoidance with excessive thinness by emphasizing the health benefits of a vegetarian diet.

Researchers have also examined how organizations shape attitudes toward body size, especially for women. Some women's team-sport policies and practices encourage excessive dieting (Ransom 1999). Weight-loss

organizations, both commercial and noncommercial, moralistically reinforce unrealistic standards of attractiveness (Stinson 2001). Overeaters Anonymous, with a mostly female membership, has come under fire for promulgating gendered norms of size (Lester 1999). By contrast, the size acceptance movement, for example, the National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance, promotes an “oppositional discourse” to counter the stigmatization of obesity (Sobal 1999).

Other topics of interest to sociologists include vegetarianism, food technology and agribusiness, food security, and nutrition/health policy. As food touches nearly every aspect of human existence, opportunities for sociological exploration are myriad. Moreover, there is room for sociologists to play important roles in formulating food-related social policies, much needed in a social world still haunted by problems of hunger, yet increasingly vulnerable to the repercussions of overconsumption.

### **FINDING A PLACE AT THE TABLE: THE FUTURE OF THE SUBFIELD**

Previously we referred to Ferguson and Zukin’s (1995) inquiry, “Why is there no sociology of food?” As we move well into the twenty-first century, the question has become “What is the future for a sociology of food and eating?” Food studies in sociology are gaining ground as a vibrant arena for the application and extension of sociological ideas. Still, as a field that readily links itself with other disciplines, the sociology of food has yet to become fully recognized as a subfield. What is the likelihood that it will do so?

Just as the cultural field of gastronomy in nineteenth-century France drew energy from an increasingly enthusiastic discourse on food and cooking (Ferguson 1998), today’s broad popular and academic fascination with food and eating has inspired a disciplinary fervor among sociologists studying food-related topics. A new generation of scholars identify themselves as sociologists of food, thereby affirming the value of the study of food production, distribution, and consumption practices for our understanding of culture and society. We see the work of

these scholars unfolding in various ways—in journals and a growing number of textbooks, at conferences, and in the classroom. Eventually, we may witness the establishment of a section on food and eating within the American Sociological Association.

For a field to develop an autonomous identity, certain conditions must be present. For example, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson (1998) argues that the field of gastronomy developed in France during the 1800s because certain social and cultural circumstances existed, among them increasing urbanization, the movement of well-trained chefs from the homes of the elites following the Revolution into their own restaurant businesses, and increased eating out in these establishments. These conditions inspired an increasingly enthusiastic public discourse about food and eating, which gradually became linked to established domains of French cultural discourse. There are certain echoes of the development of nineteenth-century gastronomic discourse in today’s emergence of the sociology of food and eating. Rapid and significant changes in food production and consumption have prompted increased sociological discourse on food and eating. Therein we find a point of convergence for those in established sociological subfields—culture, health/medicine, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, family, work and occupations, and rural sociology among them—who were already studying food-related topics. These interconnections may prove advantageous in reinforcing the *sociology* in the sociology of food and eating, perhaps strengthening its own identity within sociology while the subfield draws on the insights of other disciplines.

As discussed previously, food scholars have taken this new subfield in multiple directions. We believe this trend will continue. While this multiplicity of interests could hinder intellectual cohesiveness of the area, it also provides opportunities for interdisciplinary research and theory development. Ultimately, the sociology of food and eating offers ways of rethinking notions of production and consumption, technology, law and policy, everyday mundane practices, material culture, and identity and embodiment. In its broad scope of inquiry, the sociology of food and eating will continue to acknowledge the myriad manifestations in which food operates in human society.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF LEISURE AND RECREATION

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Leisure is a commonsense term whose etymologic roots date to Roman times and the Latin noun *licere*. It later evolved into *leisir* in Old French and from there into *leisure* in modern English (probably by way of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 AD) and into *le loisir* in Modern French. In everyday parlance, leisure refers both to the time left over after work and non-work obligations—often called free time—and to the way we spend that time. Scientific attempts to define the idea have revolved, in considerable part, around the problems generated by this simplistic definition.

Scientifically speaking, leisure is uncoerced activity undertaken during free time. Uncoerced activity is positive activity that, using their abilities and resources, people both want to do and can do at either a personally satisfying or a deeper fulfilling level (Stebbins 2005b). Note, in this regard, that boredom occurring in free time is an uncoerced state, but it is not something that bored people want to experience. Therefore, it is not leisure; it is not a positive experience, as just defined. Kaplan (1960:22–25) lists several other qualities of leisure that build on this basic definition. As uncoerced activity, leisure is an antithesis of work as an economic function. Moreover, it carries a pleasant expectation and recollection; involves a minimum of involuntary obligations; has a psychological perception of freedom; and offers a range of activity, running from inconsequence and insignificance to weightiness and importance.

Two common elements in the standard definitions of leisure—“choice” and “freely chosen activity” (see, e.g.,

Kelly 1990:21)—have, obviously, been avoided in the foregoing definition. And for good reason, since the two have lately come in for some considerable criticism. Juniu and Henderson (2001), for instance, say that such terms cannot be empirically supported, since people lack significant choice because “leisure activities are socially structured and shaped by the inequalities of society” (p. 8) (see also Shaw 2001:186–87). True, experiential definitions of leisure published in recent decades, when they do contain reference to choice, tend to refer to perceived, rather than objective, freedom to choose (e.g., Kaplan’s list). The definers recognize thus that various conditions, many of them unperceived by leisure participants and unspecified by definers, nevertheless constrain choice of leisure activities for the first. Juniu and Henderson argue that these conditions are highly influential, however, and that defining leisure even as perceived choice tends to underplay, if not overlook, their true effect.

But what would happen to human agency in the pursuit of leisure were we to abandon mentioning in definitions of leisure the likes of “choice” and “freely chosen?” It would likely be lost were it not for the principle of lack of coercion. Behavior is uncoerced when people make their own leisure. Uncoerced, people believe they are doing something they are not pushed to do, something they are not disagreeably obliged to do. Emphasis is on the acting individual, which retains in the formula human agency. This in no way denies that there may be things people want to do but cannot do because of numerous constraints on choice (e.g., aptitude, ability, socialized leisure tastes, knowledge

of available activities, accessibility of activities). In other words, when using our definition of leisure, whose central ingredient is lack of coercion, we must be sure to frame such use in proper structural, cultural, and historical context. This context is also the appropriate place for discussing choice and its constraints.

Lack of coercion to engage in an activity is a quintessential property of leisure. No other sphere of human activity can be exclusively characterized by this property. Having said this, I should nevertheless point out that some workers, including professionals, consultants, craft workers, small business people, and paid staff in volunteer organizations, find their jobs so profoundly fulfilling that they closely approach this ideal. They work at “devotee occupations” (Stebbins 2004).

Where does recreation fit in all this? It, too, has Latin roots and a modern-day French equivalent (*la récréation*), meaning literally to create again. In the contemporary experience, the word is often used as a synonym for leisure, though the latter is far more prevalent in the modern scientific literature. Consonant with this trend, I will deal largely with leisure. The idea of recreation is most distinctive when referring to activity done in free time, which, after work, refreshes and restores a person to return to work again (Godbey 1999:12–13). Of course, some leisure can accomplish the same thing, though the term fails to underscore this function as clearly as the term recreation. This may explain why “recreation” remains in the titles of a number of college and university courses as well as in those of the textbooks designed to serve their students, even while the subject matter there only sporadically touches on the recreational aspect.

In addition, the place of play in the leisure/recreation framework should be recognized. Following the orientation of Huizinga (1955), play is leisure or recreation that lacks necessity, obligation, and utility; it is undertaken with a disinterestedness that sets it as an activity apart from ordinary, real life. Players may dabble in activities that others pursue with seriousness, such as the occasional piano player vis-à-vis the rehearsed, amateur jazz pianist. Play is classified as a type of casual leisure (Stebbins 1997).

## THE RISE OF LEISURE IN THE WEST

In the following discussion of the rise of the idea and pursuit of leisure, the Protestant ethic serves as the principal orientation that, until the later part of the nineteenth century, inspired the dominant attitude toward leisure in parts of the West, particularly the United States. That orientation, as reflected in the Protestant ethic and the work ethic that succeeded it, was that, in general, leisure is to be scorned. In fact, the Protestant ethic was particularly strict:

The real moral objection is to relaxation in the security of possession, the enjoyment of wealth with the consequence of idleness and the temptations of the flesh, above all of distraction

from the pursuit of a righteous life. In fact, it is only because possession involves this danger of relaxation that it is objectionable at all. For the saints’ everlasting rest is in the next world; on earth, man must, to be certain of his state of grace, “do the works of him who sent him, as long as it is yet day.” Not leisure and enjoyment, but only activity serves to increase the glory of God, according to the definite manifestations of His will. (Weber 1930:157)

Waste of time—sloth—be it in sociability, idle talk, luxury, or excessive sleep, was considered the worst of all sins. Bluntly put, unwillingness to work was held as evidence of lack of grace. Sport received a partial reprieve from this fierce indictment, but only so far as it regenerated physical efficiency leading to improved productivity at work (Weber 1930:167). That is, sport served as recreation.

By the mid-nineteenth century in Europe and North America, leisure had, with the weakening of the Protestant ethic, gained a margin of respectability. Gelber (1999) observed that “industrialism quarantined work from leisure in a way that made employment more work-like and non-work more problematic. Isolated from each other’s moderating influences, work and leisure became increasingly oppositional as they competed for finite hours” (p. 1). Americans, according to Gelber, responded in two ways to the threat posed by leisure as potential mischief caused by idle hands. Reformers tried to eliminate or at least restrict access to inappropriate activity while encouraging people to seek socially approved free-time outlets. Hobbies and other serious leisure pursuits were high on the list of such outlets. In short, “the ideology of the workplace infiltrated the home in the form of productive leisure” (p. 2).

Hobbies were particularly valued, because they bridged especially well the worlds of work and home. And both sexes found hobbies to be appealing, albeit mostly not the same ones. Some hobbies allowed homebound women to practice and, therefore, understand work-like activities, whereas other hobbies allowed men to create in the female-dominated house their own businesslike space—the shop in the basement or the garage. Among the various hobbies, two types stood out as almost universally approved in these terms: collecting and handicrafts. Still, before approximately 1880, before becoming defined as productive use of free time, these two, along with the other hobbies, were maligned as “dangerous obsessions.”

Gelber (1999:3–4) notes that although the forms of collecting and craftwork have changed somewhat during the past 150 years, their meaning has remained the same. Hobbies have, all along, been “a way to confirm the verities of work and the free market inside the home so long as remunerative employment has remained elsewhere” (p. 4). Gelber’s observations hold best for the United States.

If, in the later nineteenth century, the Protestant ethic was no longer a driving force for much of the working population, its surviving components in the work ethic were. Gary Cross (1990:87) concluded that, during much of this century, employers and upwardly mobile employees

looked on “idleness” as threatening industrial development and social stability. The reformers in their midst sought to eliminate this “menace” by, among other approaches, attempting to build bridges to the “dangerous classes” in the new cities and, by this means, to transform them in the image of the middle class. This led to efforts to impose (largely rural) middle-class values on this group while trying to instill a desire to engage in rational recreation—in modern terms, serious leisure—and consequently to undertake less casual leisure (these latter two forms are discussed in the next section).

But times have changed even more. Applebaum (1992) writes that “with increases in the standard of living, consumerism, and leisure activities, the work ethic must compete with the ethic of the quality of life based on the release from work” (p. 587). And as the work ethic withers further in the twenty-first century, in the face of widespread reduction of work opportunities (see, e.g., Rifkin 1995; Aronowitz and Difazio 1994), leisure is slowly, but inexorably it appears, coming to the fore. In other words, leisure has, since mid-nineteenth century, been evolving into a substantial institution in its own right. At first leisure was poor and underdeveloped, standing in pitiful contrast next to its robust counterpart of work. But the dual ideas that work is inherently good and that, when it can be found, people should do it (instead of leisure) are now being increasingly challenged.

Ulrich Beck (2000) looks on the near future as a time when there will still be work to be done but a significant portion of which will be done without remuneration:

The counter-model to the work society is based not upon leisure but upon political freedom; it is a multi-activity society in which housework, family work, club work and voluntary work are prized alongside paid work and returned to the center of public and academic attention. For in the end, these other forms remained trapped inside a value imperialism of work, which must be shaken off. (P. 125)

Beck calls this work without pay “civil labor.” Some of it, however, especially club work and voluntary work, is also leisure, for it fits perfectly our definition of serious leisure set out below: the intensely fulfilling free time activity of amateurs, hobbyists, and skilled and knowledgeable volunteers.

This general history of leisure in the West will be augmented throughout with shorter statements on the early thought and research that undergird key developments in contemporary leisure theory and research. For instance, there is a long history of ideas bearing on the place of leisure in society.

## LEISURE IN SOCIETY

The issue of the place of leisure in society is the oldest in this field; it is the most pervasive and the most enduring.

Aristotle first weighed in favorably on the matter (leisure is the goal of work), and the concept has captivated philosophers ever since. It greatly worried the Puritans and, as noted, gained Weber’s attention. Thorstein Veblen (1899) introduced the dimension of leisure inequality in his famous analysis of the upper classes and their conspicuous consumption of leisure goods and services. Others conceptualized leisure as one of society’s several institutions. This social organizational approach was taken by, among others, Parker (1976:28–30) and Kaplan (1975: 28–31), and consists of identifying and describing, among others, the distinctive roles, norms, and values of this institution. In this regard, Pronovost (1998:27–29) describes two types of leisure values: “legitimization values,” or those that justify pursuing leisure, and “social motivations,” or those that justify engaging in a particular leisure activity.

Another analytic approach has been to critically examine the fit of leisure in society. Such analyses have tended to proceed from either a neo-Marxist or a cultural perspective or a combination of both. For example, Rojek (1985) and Clarke and Critcher (1986) viewed leisure as part of the hegemonic apparatus used by the ruling classes in capitalist society to keep the rest properly attuned to their work roles. Later, Rojek (2000), in calling attention to the nature and extent of deviant leisure, challenged the conventional wisdom that leisure invariably conforms to social norms.

## Time

Concern with the available amount of leisure time has, since the 1970s, been another enduring interest. One of the most pressing questions in this area has been whether, in ensuing decades, such time is increasing and, if so, for whom and in which areas of activity? As background for their own work, Cushman, Veal, and Zuzanek (1996:4–10) summarize five international comparative studies of time use. Dating from 1972 (Szalai 1972), such studies have been conducted exclusively in the West, inasmuch as developing countries lack resources for such research. Even in the West varying definitions of leisure have made it difficult to mount valid cross-national comparisons. In general, it may be concluded, nevertheless, that leisure time has increased up through the 1980s, with declines becoming evident in the 1990s. There is no clear trend in participation, with some activities becoming more popular and others becoming less so (Cushman et al. 1996:239). More particularly, Dumazedier (1988), from his position in France, discerned between 1968 and 1988 a Western trend toward increased cultural leisure, especially “educational activities,” broadly conceived of as any of the serious leisure activities.

Overall, research does support the claim that, in the United States, after-work time of many people has been growing both in amount and significance (Robinson and Godbey 1997). But, oddly, this research also suggests that

some people feel more rushed than ever. Jiri Zuzanek (1996:65) provides the clearest statement of this paradox. In general, American time-budget findings parallel those of Canada, and provide additional evidence of the complexity of life in modern industrial societies marked, as it seems, by concurrent trends toward greater time freedom as well as “harriedness” and “time pressure.” And this general trend persists despite the present orientation in a number of industries for managers to extract extra hours of service from their full-time salaried and hourly rated employees. Yet the size of this group of reluctantly overworked employees is shrinking as more and more of their positions are lost in the nearly universal shuffle to organize as much work as possible along electronic lines.

### Types of Leisure

Yet another way to treat leisure in society is to classify its many forms. The primeval typology has been, and remains in many quarters, the enduring dichotomy of work and leisure, which as part of a general warning about typologies in leisure research, Samdahl (1999:124) criticizes as oversimplistic. In fact, classifications of leisure itself are uncommon. The few efforts of this nature tend to be narrowly focused, usually revolving around classification of leisure lifestyles (see, e.g., Gunter and Gunter 1980; Kelly 1999:144–147). And yet the broader tendency to rely on undifferentiated lists of leisure activities—the prevailing way the field approaches its subject matter—masks the many ways activities can be lumped together for fruitful analysis and generalization. Obviously, watching television or taking a nap, on the one hand, and climbing a mountain or knitting a quilt, on the other, involve different motives, return different benefits to the participant, and take place in different social organizational milieu.

To avoid premature theoretical closure, all classifications should be grounded in ongoing exploratory research, which constantly checks their component types against the reality they claim to represent. This is precisely the empirical foundation of the most widely accepted classification of leisure activities at present, namely, the serious/casual/project-based leisure perspective (Stebbins 1992, 1997, 2001, 2005a). In the spirit of the extensive exploration that underlies this perspective, its three forms are not claimed to encompass all possible leisure activities, since one or more new forms could be discovered or existing forms refashioned.

Serious leisure is systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that participants find so interesting and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins 1992:3). The adjective “serious” (a word Stebbins’s research respondents often used) embodies such qualities as earnestness, sincerity, importance, and carefulness. This adjective signals the importance of these three forms of activity in the everyday lives of participants, in

that pursuing the three eventually engenders deep self-fulfillment.

Casual leisure is immediately intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it. It is fundamentally hedonic, engaged in for the significant level of pure enjoyment, or pleasure, found there. It is also the classificatory home of much of the deviant leisure discussed by Rojek (1997:392–393). Casual leisure is further distinguished from serious leisure by six characteristics of the latter: need to persevere at the activity, availability of a leisure career, need to put in effort to gain skill and knowledge, realization of various special benefits, unique ethos and social world, and an attractive personal and social identity.

Project-based leisure is a short-term, moderately complicated, either one-shot or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time (Stebbins 2005a). It requires considerable planning, effort, and sometimes skill or knowledge, but for all that neither is it serious leisure nor is it intended to develop into such. Nor is it casual leisure. The adjective *occasional* describes widely spaced undertakings for such regular occasions as arts festivals, sports events, religious holidays, individual birthdays, or national holidays, while *creative* stresses that the undertaking results in something new or different, showing imagination, skill, or knowledge. Though most projects would appear to be continuously pursued until completed, it is conceivable that some might be interrupted for several weeks, months, or even years.

### The Meaning and Motivation of Leisure

What motivates people to participate in certain leisure activities rather than others has fascinated philosophers and social scientists from Aristotle to the present. This is an enormously complicated issue, which helps explain why it is still in the course of being examined. Sociology retains its generalized approach to leisure through studying the meaning of leisure for those who partake of it, an interest it shares with social psychology. There is a vast literature here, a substantial amount of it concerned with the idea of “leisure experience.” Such experience is commonly studied by examining its quality, duration, intensity, and memorability. Examining leisure satisfaction constitutes another way of assessing the meaning of leisure (Mannell 1999:235–252). Shaw (1985) applied the sociological conceptualization of meaning—the definition of the situation—in her influential study of the meaning of work and leisure in everyday life. She found that activities defined as leisure were freely chosen, intrinsically motivated, and related to the nonwork context of activity. Later, Samdahl (1988) argued that “leisure is a particular definition of the situation” (p. 29), with the leisure situation, vis-à-vis other types of situations, itself being distinct.

This concept of meaning relates to leisure in society, because meaning at this level is, in significant part, shaped by the role leisure plays socially as well as by the way

society evaluates that role. For instance, an amateur orchestra provides the local community with classical music, an art form valued highly by many of those there who yearn for and appreciate this form of high culture. Moreover, knowing the meaning of a thing, activity, experience, or situation has for an individual is tantamount to understanding that person's motivation. Sociologists have long treated such meaning as a key element in the motivation of behavior (see Stebbins 1975:32–35).

The sociology of leisure contributes further to the theory of leisure motivation by stating that such motivation also roots in a variety of organized social conditions. Here, as in most other areas of life, action is structured, or organized, in dyads, small groups, social networks, and grassroots associations, as well as in larger complex organizations and, still more broadly, in social worlds and social movements (Stebbins 2002). Each kind of organization structures in particular and unique ways the motivation and social behaviour of its members, making leisure motivation as much a sociological issue as a psychological one.

## SPECIALIZATION IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF LEISURE

Examinations of leisure from a sociological perspective were sporadic until approximately the beginning of the 1950s, the aforementioned work of Veblen being a notable exception. Later, Lundberg, Komarovsky, and McInerney (1969) mounted a study of leisure in an American suburb, which was to become the first of a handful of community studies in the United States in which leisure was a primary point of analysis. Other notable studies were conducted by Vidich and Bensman (1968) on small town leisure and by Hollingshead (1975) on youth and leisure in a small Midwestern city. The main goal in these studies was to describe the role leisure played in community life. In fact, they laid the foundation for the social organizational approach to leisure in society.

David Riesman's (1961) observations on the decline of the work ethic in the United States and the rise there of the other-directed man depicted a person well in tune with the leisure interests of the mass crowd. His work ushered in an era of work-leisure comparisons as well as a lasting debate about this basic typology. Shortly thereafter, writings began appearing on mass leisure (see, e.g., Larrabee and Meyerson 1958) and on the ways work and leisure are related. For example, Kando and Summers (1971:83–86) formulated and tested two hypotheses relating to “spillover” or work is similar to leisure and “compensation”; that is, work that is separate or different from leisure, though neither was unequivocally confirmed (Kelly 1987:147–53). In Britain, Parker (1971) was writing about the future of work and leisure as they influence each other. Moreover, this line of analysis continues (see, e.g., Reid 1995; Haworth 1997; Stebbins 2004), for the relationship between the two is complicated and ever

changing. And this in the present era where they are assuming equal importance as considered under the rubric of “work/life balance.”

Beginning in the early 1980s, the sociological study of leisure began to add various specialties, the most prominent being symbolic interactionism, feminist perspective, family studies, and life cycle and life course. They did not, however, eclipse the broader interest of leisure in society, which has continued.

## Symbolic Interactionism

John R. Kelly is the most prominent and prolific representative of symbolic interactionism in the sociology of leisure and the interdisciplinary field of leisure studies. The fullest expression of Kelly's interactionist perspective was set forth in 1983 (Kelly 1983), when he examined interaction in leisure activities as a main field for identity development throughout the life course. Using the example of amateurs, he observed that leisure can be most substantial, and that such leisure typically becomes the basis for a valued personal as well as social identity. Leisure in this sense—an amateur cellist, archaeologist, or baseball player—tends to become a central part of a person's life, a true “central life interest” (Dubin 1992). In fact, this leisure identity may be as important to people as their work identity. But leisure identities, like identities in other spheres of life, are fashioned in interaction with like-minded folk. Still, the centrality of leisure for a person may change over the life course, owing to the magnitude of family- or work-related obligations as, for instance, during a period of retirement when leisure involvements and associated identities may flourish.

Kelly classified leisure interaction according to four types. The first, *doubly casual*, is low in both activity intensity and social interaction, as exemplified in watching with others a television program. In *socially intense* leisure, activity intensity is low, but social interaction is at a high level. A session of gossip after work about other employees illustrates this type. *Activity-intense* leisure, where the interactional component is either minimal or highly routine, is often solitary (e.g., painting, absorbing reading, long-distance running), but not exclusively so. Aspects of team sports, such as throwing a free throw in basketball or kicking a field goal, can be classified as activity intense. The fourth type—*doubly intense leisure*—is found in activity requiring high levels of action and verbal or nonverbal communication. Dancing in a ballet production, playing string quartets, singing barbershop, and performing in a play are all instances of this type of leisure. Kelly also looked at the many social situations in which leisure can take place, including its fleeting occurrences in the course of doing routine tasks like joking with colleagues at work or doodling on a piece of paper during a meeting.

Moreover, Kelly (1987:120) observed social interaction is itself a form of leisure. It is likely that most socially



intense leisure can be seen in this light. In effect, Kelly was discussing Simmel's (1949) "sociable conversation," the essence of which lies in its playfulness, represents a quality enjoyed for its intrinsic value. Sociable conversation guarantees its participants maximization of joy, relief, and vivacity; it is democratic activity in that the pleasure of one person is dependent on that of the other people in the exchange. But, to the extent such interaction becomes instrumental, or problem-centered, as it may when work or some other obligation insinuates itself, its leisure character, if the obligation is disagreeable, fades in proportion.

### Gender and the Feminist Perspective

Today, the gender and feminist perspectives constitute a lively and central part of leisure studies. Susan Shaw (2003:200) writes that research conducted during the 1970s touched on the gender issue by breaking down rates of leisure participation according to sex of participant. Enlightened by the feministic perspective, many female leisure researchers viewed this demographic approach as highly skewed in that woman's unique experience of leisure and the unique problems she confronts were ignored. Other female leisure scholars pursued such issues as the gendered nature of leisure for both sexes and how leisure behavior influences gender beliefs and ideologies (Shaw 2003:202).

Both the feminists and the gender specialists share an interest in the constructionist approach to human stereotyping in the world of leisure. They have in common a mutual concern with identifying and explaining the constraints age, class, and geographic location impose on gender. Recognizing that constraints on leisure may be either personal or environmental, Harrington, Dawson, and Bolla (1992) studied a group of Ontario women to assess how women perceive such constraints. They found, for example, that the necessity to find childcare discouraged some women from participating in leisure activities.

In describing the initial feminist approach to understanding leisure, Henderson and Bialeschki (1999) note that "researchers focused attention on leisure and recreation issues for women and have provided ways to challenge the predominantly androcentric perspectives of leisure research prior to the mid 1980s" (p. 167). Examples include the work of Bella (1989), Glancy (1991), and Henderson (1990), who found that the feminist perspective differs from sociological research on women in that the former stresses social change to counter oppressive practices. This perspective draws heavily on the leisure experience tradition, while looking critically at such issues in a woman's leisure lifestyle as its capacity for equality, liberation, and integrity. The perspective also stresses use of exploratory-qualitative methodology to enhance the female point of view unfettered by androcentric perspectives. This approach is guided by principles of inequality and personal integrity, which serve as sensitizing concepts (Van den Hoonaard 1997).

The feminist agenda in the sociology of leisure has led to *resistance*. Peter Donnelly (1988) says of resistance in female sport and exercise that some women resist dominant views (often shared by both men and women) of what is appropriate leisure for their sex. Accordingly, to show what they are really interested in and capable of, they intentionally try to excel at such traditionally male activities as the hobby of kayaking (Bartram 2001:10) and sport in general (Wearing 1992).

The soap opera also serves as a vehicle for resistance. Beyond the appeal of sociable conversation with family and friends on intriguing happenings in their favorite soaps lies what Brown (1994:161–176) calls the "pleasure of resistance." That is, females find numerous opportunities to resist, through talk, the subtle oppression of the dominant, largely male culture. The culture of the home and women's concerns are devalued in male culture, which includes a depreciatory estimation of soap opera itself, in part because the genre has been designed to appeal to the stereotyped female role. Soap opera fan clubs and gossip networks (some of which are now electronic) allow members to create personal meanings as they go about their daily lives, while the soap magazines bring additional grist to this mill. Brown found that, in these meanings, women are almost always dominant and in control.

### Family

Since leisure is pursued with family members, it was only a matter of time before this dimension of leisure became a dominant focus. Research on family and leisure initiated during the 1970s and enhanced throughout the 1980s commonly focused on leisure and the married couple. Orthner (1975) identified three types of marital leisure activities: individual activities engaged in alone; joint activities requiring interaction such as a card game; and activities requiring little interaction such as watching a hockey game. Although children make a difference, it was unclear from Orthner's research whether individual activities undermine marital satisfaction or whether joint activities foster such satisfaction. Nonetheless, more recent research has demonstrated that family leisure is consistently related to strength and bonding (Hawks 1991). Moreover, shared leisure experiences clearly build satisfying relationships.

More recently, Shaw and Dawson (2001) introduced the concept of "purposive leisure." Such family leisure, even when involving one or both parents, is purposive leisure intended to benefit children with a special, family-enhancing purpose. The result is increased family bonding, communication, personal development, self-fulfillment, and, sometimes, health and fitness. In other words, through leisure activities the family can enhance moral values, personal well-being, and quality of life.

Kay (2003) holds that the family is a major arena in which self-identity, family roles, and gender relations are fashioned and experienced. Analysis of family leisure

activities discloses patterns of gender inequality that may also enhance intimate marital relationships. This raises debates about work/life balance, as when members of the couple see that balance differently, perhaps through gender-colored glasses. Work/life balance is receiving more serious consideration today than in the work-oriented past, with leisure, family, and family leisure now touted as important counterweights to the job. One aspect of this balance that affects the family is the emphasis some people give to achieving an “optimal leisure lifestyle” (Stebbins 2002:14–15), defined as an ideal mix of casual, serious, and project-based leisure. In such a lifestyle ample opportunity exists for pursuit of self-fulfillment in free time while minimizing family conflict over the person’s use of that time.

### **Life Cycle/Life Course**

The classic study of leisure and the life cycle was conducted in Britain by Robert Rapoport and Rhona Rapoport (1975), who reported that variation in leisure patterns according to life cycle stage is greatest among married partners, especially those with children. They observed further that many people live out their lives in three main areas—work, family, and leisure—and that in each they pass through four stages of the life cycle: adolescence, young adulthood, establishment, and later years.

Life course is also broader than its companion idea of family life cycle, in that the latter is limited to family matters. Additionally, family life cycle, although chronological as life course is, is not, however, essentially processual. Process, or a series of actions, events, and changes, is based on the assumption that these actions emerge from or are influenced by each other. Moreover, this influence may have a past (retrospective), present (immediate), or future (prospective) frame of reference. Life cycle, on the other hand, deals with historically arrayed, discrete slices of time, called phases, while within each, events and actions are typically treated as static. In short, life course offers a distinctive perspective on leisure as a social process.

Kelly’s (1983) work on the life course is also germane to the life cycle. Focusing on the final years of the life course, Kelly (1993) added to the commonly recognized prerequisites for satisfactory aging, namely functional health and viable level of financial support, two dimensions thought to enhance quality of living among the elderly. These are satisfactory relationships and regular engagement in activity, which for most retired people is leisure.

Examining the other end of the life course, youth and leisure, Roberts (1999:115–125) compared the leisure of contemporary youth with that of youthful leisure prior to the 1970s. He notes that modern youth face more uncertain futures and that their biographies are more individualized, a condition caused by the great variety of opportunities in postsecondary education and the workplace as well as by frequent periods of unemployment. Additionally, modern

youth are more likely to feel responsible for their current situation and for shaping their own future.

Other sociological specialties in the study of leisure that exist have yet to achieve the same level of scholarly prominence as the foregoing. The most notable of these are deviant leisure, racial and ethnic dimensions of leisure, and the leisure of special populations or people with disabilities. Each of these is now beginning to attract significant attention. As Roberts (1999:192–220) notes, leisure lifestyles may engender distinctive identities as well as becoming differentiated along lines of age and social class. Rojek (1997) outlined the domain of deviant leisure, identifying the several areas of life in which it may occur, while Stebbins (1997) observed that most deviant leisure takes the form of casual leisure, though deviant belief systems in science, religion, and politics are complicated enough to amount to serious leisure for those attempting to learn and apply them. Rojek (2000) argues, however, that classifying deviant leisure in this manner can obscure its broader implications for social change. In both the field of race and ethnicity and that of special populations, the issues of access and inclusion have become objects of considerable research. These issues relate to delivery of leisure services (Dattilo and Williams 1999:451–466), as well as to inclusion and exclusion in formal and informal leisure groups (Patterson 2001; Taylor 2001).

### **THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF LEISURE**

Although few academic units offer a leisure and recreation curriculum, cultural sociology has, in recent decades, become the center of the sociology of leisure, lending some credence to the claim that the sociology of leisure is alive and well. This claim is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of leisure, however, for much of leisure falls well beyond the scope of cultural sociology. That is, leisure is far broader than the consumption of fine and popular art, sports events, and the mass media of entertainment even while each forms an important part of the sociology of culture. Additionally, the professional production of such arts, events, and media is clearly not leisure-related activity. Indeed, much leisure activity cannot be conceived of as cultural sociology as seen in the pursuit of amateur, hobbyist, and volunteer interests, certain “noncultural” casual leisure activities such as napping and sociable conversation, and free-time short-term projects. For similar reasons, the sociology of sport cannot be regarded as a disguised version of the sociology of leisure.

So where, then, does the sociology of leisure hang its scholarly hat? It turns out that its vestuary is now almost exclusively departments and similar academic units variously named Leisure Studies, Leisure and Recreation, Recreation and Park Administration, Sport, Leisure, and Physical Education, Parks, Leisure, and Tourism Studies, and Recreation and Tourism Management. Sociologists in

these units tend to identify with the interdisciplinary field of *leisure studies*. Indeed, sociology, psychology, and social psychology are the main disciplines in this hybrid field while geography, history, philosophy, forestry, management, physical education, and environmental studies are also well represented.

Furthermore, leisure studies has become an applied field of practice, with considerable research and application devoted to such practical matters as leisure counseling, leisure education, delivery of leisure services, and development and management of parks and recreational centers. There are also strong ties with tourism research and enterprise and, more recently, environmental studies. Leisure sociology helps inform these diverse applications and, of course, is further shaped by them.

The sociology of leisure since approximately the decade of the 1970s has, by and large, come of age theoretically and empirically within this interdisciplinary arena. The handful of leisure sociologists in sociology departments are inclined to publish in its journals and attend the more prominent of its conferences.

The sociology of leisure is nonetheless advancing. It has become a vibrant subdiscipline of its own, even if institutionally alienated from mainstream sociology. In the twenty-first century, as leisure gains more equal standing with work, as the issues pertaining to the issues relating to work/life balance, quality of life, and well-being grow in importance, it is unclear whether sociologists will again play a prominent role in an area of academic study that grew out of their discipline.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT

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Organized sport, as an area of social life, has become increasingly significant in the last 150 years. Sport now attracts the attention, time, resources, and energy of many millions of people around the world. In addition to the significance of sport itself as a cultural form, it is an activity that is related to and has the ability to shed light on many other aspects of society such as education, the media, health, the economy, politics, families and communities, and to expose social processes such as globalization, democratization, and socialization to sociological analysis. Despite this, sociological attention to such a significant area of social life continues to be limited, with some suggesting that the sociology of sport has been the “Rodney Dangerfield” of sociology.

This chapter examines the origins of the sociology of sport and explores its interdisciplinarity particularly in terms of its dual “location” in the disciplines of sociology and physical education. The development of sociology of sport is examined over three phases, together with a consideration of recent developments; and this is followed by an examination of the achievements of the sociology of sport in adding to the body of knowledge in sociology over the same three overlapping phases and a consideration of recent developments and attempts to win “respect.” The chapter concludes by speculating about the future of a field of study that Ingham and Donnelly (1997) characterized as “disunity in unity.”<sup>1</sup>

### ORIGINS

The sociology of sport began to emerge as a formally recognized subdiscipline of sociology in the second half

of the twentieth century. There were a number of earlier examples of sociological attention to the field of sport. In the United States, Veblen (1899) referred to sports as “marks of an arrested spiritual development” (1934:253) and to college sports as “manifestations of the predatory temperament” (p. 255) in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. W. I. Thomas (1901) and G. E. Howard (1912) dealt with “the gaming instinct” and the “social psychology of the spectator,” respectively in articles published in the *American Journal of Sociology*. Spencer, Simmel, Weber, Piaget, Hall, Sumner, Huizinga, and Mead all made reference to play, games, and/or sport in their work, but it was probably the German, Heinz Risse (1921) who first characterized sport as a sociological field of study in his book *Soziologie des Sports*.

Following World War II, there was growing interest in sport from a sociological perspective. By the 1960s, television was beginning to devote significant amounts of time to sport, professional leagues were developing and expanding, organized youth sports in communities and educational institutions were beginning to proliferate, and the Cold War was being fought at the Olympics and other international competitions. In the United States, social scientists such as Gregory Stone, David Riesman, Erving Goffman, Eric Berne, James Coleman, and Charles Page all produced works referring to sport. Their interests were reflected internationally in the emergence of the first academic association in the field in 1964. The International Committee for the Sociology of Sport (now named the International Sociology of Sport Association) was comprised of both sociologists and physical educators from East and West Germany, France, Switzerland, Finland,

England, the Soviet Union, Poland, the United States, and Japan. The Committee/Association, which is affiliated with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization through the International Council of Sport Sciences and Physical Education and the International Sociological Association, has held annual conferences since 1966 and began to produce a journal (the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, now published by Sage) in that same year.

The first English language books in the field also began to appear in the 1960s (e.g., McIntosh 1963; Jokl 1964). Kenyon and Loy's (1965) call for a sociology of sport is considered to be a key programmatic statement, and the same authors produced the first anthology in the field, *Sport, Culture, and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport* (Loy and Kenyon 1969).

## INTERDISCIPLINARITY

The sociology of sport provides a large social scientific umbrella and may be one of the more interdisciplinary, or at least multidisciplinary, subdisciplines in the social sciences. In addition to sociology, researchers whose work is perhaps more recognized as belonging to other mainstream social science disciplines such as political science, economics, political economy, social psychology, cultural anthropology, history, human/cultural geography, and religious studies have all published in sociology of sport journals and presented papers at sociology of sport conferences. Thus, the sociology of sport is, in many ways, a shorthand term for the social science of sport. This occurred mainly because the sociology of sport became organized early and, because it remained open to a wide range of social sciences, organizations, journals, and conferences did not develop in other fields. Some exceptions include The Anthropological Association for the Study of Play, and its short-lived journal, *Play and Culture*; the history of sport, with its own national and international organizations and journals; and some researchers involved in economics and policy studies who have also become involved recently with sport management associations (e.g., the European Association for Sport Management and the North American Society for Sport Management).

The sociology of sport has also experienced the same type of fragmentation as mainstream sociology in the last 30 years. The emergence of departments such as "policy studies," "gender studies," "media/communications studies," and "race and ethnic studies," many employing individuals trained as sociologists, produces another layer of social sciences. Scholars in these departments are also carrying out sport-related research and presenting and publishing work in the sociology of sport.

A third area of interdisciplinarity involves the relationship of sociology of sport to both sociology and physical education (now sometimes called kinesiology or human kinetics).

Many of the subdisciplines of sociology have dual affiliations—for example, the sociology of religion may be found in both sociology and religious studies departments. However, the connections between the sociology of sport, physical education, and sociology may be more striking and consequential. The sociology of sport began to emerge in North America at a time (1960s) when physical education (and other applied professional) departments in universities, which had until then primarily emphasized teacher preparation, were under pressure to develop an academic body of knowledge and to increase research productivity. The solution, proposed by physical educator Franklin Henry (1964) at the University of California, Berkeley, was to seek legitimacy in the disciplines. He proposed that "there is indeed a scholarly field of knowledge basic to physical education. It is constituted of certain portions of such diverse fields as anatomy, physics and physiology, cultural anthropology, history and sociology, as well as psychology" (p. 32). Thus, just as some sociologists were beginning to see sport as a legitimate area of sociological inquiry, physical educators were being encouraged to establish a disciplinary specialty, and graduate education in physical education soon began to emphasize those specialties, including sociology. The disciplinary emphasis in physical education became widespread internationally and was adopted in the university physical education curricula of most developed nations.

Sage (1997) provides a detailed account of the relationships between sociology and physical education in the sociology of sport, pointing out the closeness of the relationship, and its complexities. Describing "the development of the sociology of sport [as] a joint venture for physical educators and sociologists," (p. 325) he points to examples such as the following:

- Sociology of sport courses, required by physical education departments, being taught by sociology departments
- Physical education graduate students specializing in the sociology of sport taking course work in sociology departments
- Sociologists serving on thesis and dissertation committees for such graduate students
- Professors employed by sociology and physical education departments being cross-appointed to the other department

The University of Massachusetts in the 1970s and, more recently, the University of Illinois are examples of places where extremely close relations developed between faculty members and graduate students in both physical education and sociology departments. Sage (1997) goes on to note that both sociologists and physical educators specializing in the sociology of sport have served together on the boards of national, regional, and international sociology of sport associations, and on the editorial boards of sociology of sport journals. In addition, the leading organization in the field (the International Sociology of Sport Association) exposes this dual affiliation by meeting biennially at the

World Congress of Sociology (as Research Committee No. 27 of the International Sociological Association), and the Pre-Olympic (Sport Sciences) Congress, respectively.

Despite this closeness, relations are not always harmonious. For example, in countries such as Germany and Japan two different sociology of sport associations exist, one sponsored by physical education and the other by sociology. Membership may cross over, but attempts to merge the two organizations have been resisted. Issues of prestige and status are involved here. Sociology may not feel that it ranks very highly in university departmental prestige rankings, but it *knows* that it ranks more highly than physical education (which has found the “dumb jock” image to be stubbornly persistent).

Similarly, the study of sport carries little prestige in sociology departments, and Ingham and Donnelly (1997) noted that some individuals graduating with Ph.D.s in sociology, and whose doctoral theses had dealt with sport, were counseled against continuing work in that area—one noting that he had been advised to seek a more “mainstream and rigorous” area of sociology.

Sociologists of sport in physical education departments may find themselves in a double bind. Not only has their work carried little prestige in the discipline of sociology but it also may put them at odds with their colleagues in departments of physical education. As Hollands (1984) noted, “The very structure of sport study in North America ironically pairs the social critic [sociologist of sport] with those very individuals in sport science whose professional ideology reinforces ahistorical and functionalist approaches to the subject” (p. 73). Although the field of sociology of sport provides an important exemplar of interdisciplinarity, some 40 years of research in the field may also be characterized as an attempt to win “respect.”

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIELD

In 1988, Jean Harvey and Hart Canelon provided a contemporary sociological rationale for the sociology of sport:

Sport is primarily a social activity, and the sports problems that the media report on every day are essentially social problems. Sport is neither an idle flexing of the muscles without cause or consequence, nor merely a series of motor gestures devoid of social significance. It is a set of social structures and practices whose orientations and objectives have been adopted or challenged from the very beginning by various social agents. (P. 1)

This rationale reflected over 20 years of development in the field and would not have been widely understood in the 1960s. Ingham and Donnelly (1997) identified three widely overlapping stages in the development of sociology of sport in North America, which they labeled (1) searching for a sociology for the sociology of sport, (2) early confrontations with Marxism, and (3) cultural studies.

Donnelly (1996, 2003), borrowing heavily from ideas expressed by John Loy, characterized these three phases as “reflection” (sport reflects society), “reproduction” (sport is heavily implicated in social reproduction), and “resistance” (the status quo may be challenged through sport). The quote from Harvey and Canelon (above) captures the third (“resistance”), more mature phase, but not the struggles to reach that level of analysis. The following section outlines developments in the field in each of these three periods and concludes with an examination of recent developments.

## Reflection/Searching for a Sociology for the Sociology of Sport

The sociology of sport emerged at a time when U.S. sociology was dominated by structural functionalism and instrumental positivism. The prevailing view of sport in most countries where the sociology of sport was developing was that “sport reflects society”/“sport is a mirror (or microcosm) of society.” Functionalism and positivism provided a comfortable, if somewhat contradictory, fit for physical educators in the sociology of sport: Adopting a functionalist approach permitted them to “find support for the so-called ‘social development’ objectives of physical education” (Kenyon 1969:172), to identify the functions of sport, exercise, and recreation, and to determine how sport functioned to socialize individuals to set goals, maintain discipline, manage aggression, and adapt to change (Parson’s four-system needs); adopting a positivist approach fitted well with the newly scientized departments of physical education, but scientific “objectivity” was compromised by seeking functionality and becoming what Kenyon (1969) termed “evangelist[s] for exercise” (p. 172).

However, this was also the 1960s, when both sociology and Western society were beginning to experience radical changes. In parallel with the emergence of a disciplinary sociology of sport, Ingham and Donnelly (1997) also identify the emergence of a (often overlapping) “social problems in athletics” orientation. Feminist critiques (e.g., Hart 1976) led eventually in the United States to the inclusion of sport in Title IX, the Educational Amendments to the Civil Rights Act, in 1972, and subsequently to gender equity provisions for sport in many other countries. Racial critiques of sport in the United States were manifested most obviously in Smith and Carlos’s “black power” demonstration at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, described by Edwards (1969) in *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*, and were then expressed internationally in the anti-apartheid movement. More general radical critiques of North American sport were provided by Jack Scott (1971) and Paul Hoch (1972).

This critique of sport was anticipated by neo-Marxist scholars in France and Germany (e.g., Vinnai 1973; Brohm 1978; Rigauer 1981), but their work did not become available in English until later (cf. the publication dates noted above). Meanwhile, in England, Norbert Elias and Eric

Dunning were beginning to develop a figurational sociology of sport, an approach that has continued to influence some research in both the history and the sociology of sport.

### Reproduction/Early Confrontations with Marxism

The view that sport reflects society was an important starting point for the sociology of sport.<sup>2</sup> It helped overcome the view, held particularly among some philosophers (e.g., Novak 1976) that sport was a distinct sphere of activity, somehow separate from and perhaps even transcending history and social life. Although the “reflection” thesis was an accurate description of the relationship between sport and society and persists even today in the way some sociology of sport courses are taught, it had no interpretive or explanatory power with regard to that relationship. By the 1970s, the increasing influence of the “social problems in athletics” perspective combined with an increased reading of critical social theory from both North America (e.g., Mills 1959, 2000; Gouldner 1970; MacPherson 1985) and Europe produced the start of a “critical shift” in the sociology of sport (a shift also evident in mainstream sociology). This was initially distinct from, but later combined with (under a “cultural studies” perspective), a growing interest in interpretive sociology in the sociology of sport.

The European neo-Marxist critique of sport asserted that sport was implicated in socializing individuals into work discipline, assertive individualism, and hypercompetitiveness. In other words, sport not only reflected capitalist society, it helped reproduce it and reproduce dominant social and cultural relations in society as a whole (see Hargreaves 1986). This idea of social reproduction is developed in Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) work showing how the French education system helps reproduce the class structure of French society. Thus, in the sociology of sport, rather than passively mirroring society sport could now be seen as actively helping to maintain a particular set of power relations in an inequitable society.

A shift in emphasis in social inequality studies occurred in the sociology of sport during the 1980s, placing greater emphasis on race and gender (and less on social class); and the reproduction thesis proved to be extremely valuable. Sport came to be seen as a “school for masculinity”—at a time of rapidly changing gender relations and increasing social power for women, sport came to be seen as one of the last bastions of masculine power, socializing in males a sense of gender superiority that was considered to extend beyond the bounds of sport. And, in addition to reproducing traditional gender relations, sport also came to be viewed as one of the barriers to changing race relations—helping to reify and promote certain stereotypical mental and physical racial characteristics.

The reproduction thesis is grounded in structuralist approaches to sociology, with no evidence of agency (or counterhegemony) in analyses that focus on social processes rather than social relations. The thesis came to be

considered as an accurate and dynamic but partial attempt to characterize the relationship between sport and society.

### Resistance/Cultural Studies

The reproduction thesis describes a dynamic, but one-way relationship between sport and society. If the status quo was effectively reproduced from generation to generation, no changes in the relative power of social groups, and their social and cultural relations, would occur. Individuals are rendered as passive agents, falsely conscious consumers of the new “opiate of the masses” (sport), and unaware of the forces involved in producing and reproducing inequality and maintaining their subordinate status. As Coakley (1993) notes (see also Wrong 1961), structuralist views of socialization (both functionalist and critical/social reproduction) see individuals “as passive learners ‘molded’ and ‘shaped’ by ‘society’” (p. 170). If individuals are believed to have some part in understanding, giving meaning to, and shaping their destiny, it is necessary to reintroduce agency. The resistance thesis attempts to capture the two-way process in which reproductive forces are resisted—in which agency articulates with social structure.

This synthesis of agency and structure was first characterized by Gruneau (1983), whose book *Class, Sport, and Social Development* is considered a theoretical turning point in both the sociology and history of sport. His solution, sometimes referred to as hegemony theory, was developed from the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971), Raymond Williams (e.g., 1977), Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., 1984), and Anthony Giddens (e.g., 1976), and relied heavily on Gramsci’s ideas about social power and hegemony. As Bourdieu (1978) noted, in an idea that resonated strongly with many sociologists of sport,

Sport, like any other practice, is an object of struggles between the fractions of the dominant class, and also between the social classes . . . the social definition of sport is an object of struggles . . . in which what is at stake, *inter alia*, is the monopolistic capacity to impose the legitimate definition of sporting practice and the legitimate function of sporting activity. (P. 826)

These ideas permitted sport to be seen not only as dominated by elites (often characterized during the 1980s and 1990s as upper class, white males) and by hegemonic groups such as the International Olympic Committee, FIFA (the international soccer federation), sporting goods manufacturers, and media conglomerates but also as “contested terrain,” as the “site of struggles” over “the forms, circumstances and meanings of participation” (Donnelly 1993: 17).

In this way of understanding sport, individuals are seen as active, self-reflexive agents

- who “might quite consciously value sports as meaningful and beneficial aspects of their lives, while at the same time being aware that ruling groups attempt to use sport as an instrument of control” (Hargreaves 1986:43);

- who have the capacity to change the conditions under which they practice sport and recognize and change the conditions that maintain their subordinate status; and
- whose attempts at resistance sometimes have an opposite effect, serving to reinforce the conditions of their subordination (see Donnelly 1988).

Thus, approaches to the sociology of sport adopting the resistance thesis focused on sport as an aspect of culture, produced (socially constructed and reconstructed) by the participants, but not always in the manner of their own choosing (to paraphrase Marx [1852] 1991).

### Recent Developments/Disunity in Unity

During the 1990s, there was an evident “postmodern shift” in the sociology of sport, accompanied by the type of fragmentation, noted previously, evident in mainstream sociology. “Cultural studies” began to overtake sociology in the sociology of sport, “postmodern” theories, including “queer theory” came to the fore; new qualitative methodologies became fashionable (narrative sociology, autobiographical studies, case studies); and the subject matter of the sociology of sport broadened to include all forms of physical culture from sexual activity and dance to exercise in all its various forms. In 1997, Ingham and Donnelly asked, “whether the future of our ‘community’ [‘sociologists’ of ‘sport’] will be anchored in *sociology* or *sport* at all and, if not, what will be its alternatives?” (p. 395). While these trends are ongoing, research representing the whole range of development (from functionalist to “hegemony theory” to postmodernist) is still being produced, and there is some recent evidence of a “sociological revival” (noted below). While the field may not be concerned specifically with sociology in its traditional sense, or only with sport, and while there have been some debates in the field about a change of name (e.g., “cultural studies of physical culture”), a recognizable sociology of sport still exists as “disunity in unity.”

### ACHIEVEMENTS/WINNING “RESPECT”

Some 30 years ago, Gunther Luschen (1975) argued that the sociology of sport could serve to (1) contribute to sociological theory; (2) contribute to the body of knowledge of physical education, physical culture (or sport science); (3) contribute to public policy problems; and (4) provide sport personnel with a better understanding of their own status and role within society (cited in Loy 1996:959). Since that time, while there is some question as to whether sociology of sport has contributed to sociological theory (although sport has provided an ideal forum for testing theory), it has certainly contributed to the body of knowledge in both sociology and physical education, contributed to public policy, and provided many sport personnel with “a better understanding.” In parallel with the previous section, the

following provides a brief overview of the research accomplishments of the sociology of sport in each of the periods identified above, and concludes with an examination of recent developments and gaining respect.

### Reflection/Searching for a Sociology for the Sociology of Sport

The research achievements during this period are characteristic of both the time and an emerging field of study.<sup>3</sup> Initially, there was work to “legitimize” and justify the emergence of a new field of study, and definitional work identifying the meaning of, and differences between, play, games, and sport. Such attempts to develop rigid definitions eventually declined with growing acceptance that sports are social constructions, whose definition depends on contextual factors such as time and place.

A great deal of the early work in the field reflected the close relationship at the time between the sociology of sport and the psychology and social psychology of sport—a relationship that echoes an earlier (late nineteenth and early twentieth century) similar relationship in mainstream sociology. This relationship manifested itself in research on group dynamics, group cohesion, leadership, social facilitation, and what is now termed “social loafing.” The relationship was also evident in some of the early socialization research, which focused on roles and motivation; and some of the group dynamics research on sports teams subsequently led to research on sport subcultures. However, the socialization research, which was primarily developed at the University of Wisconsin and by graduates from Wisconsin, was where the functionalist and instrumental positivist aspects of U.S. sociology in the 1960s and early 1970s was best expressed. The approach led eventually to sophisticated statistical modeling (e.g., path analysis) of the ways in which people became involved in sport, only falling out of favor as the “socialized” came to be recognized as active agents in the process.

Research on sport and social stratification, social differentiation, and social mobility initially took the form of categorical analyses of class, race, and gender. Some early distributive analyses, combined with the emerging critiques characterized previously as the “social problems in athletics” approach, provided evidence for social policy changes that began to occur with regard to race and gender participation in sport. Perhaps the research that best characterizes this period is Loy and McElvogue’s (1970) distributive analyses of “stacking” and the related work of Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon (1978: chap. 3) on leadership. Combining research on group dynamics with social differentiation and social problems approaches, and incorporating research by H. M. Blalock and Oscar Grusky, Loy and McElvogue (1970) showed how (and provided a powerful interpretation of the reasons why), in baseball and football, white players were predominantly in “central” positions and black players were predominantly in “peripheral” positions. As Ball (1973) noted,



"Stacking . . . involves assignment to a playing position, an achieved status, on the basis of an ascribed status" (p. 98). The work developed to describe and explain why coaching and administrative positions were occupied predominantly by individuals who formerly held "central" positions as players (i.e., whites) (Loy et al. 1978). This research fulfilled a number of Luschen's (1975) predictions, not only adding to the body of knowledge and contributing to "middle range" theory development but also contributing to social policy and to the "understanding" of sports personnel. "Stacking" became a widely known phenomenon; professional team managers found it increasingly difficult to reassign player positions if such reassignment appeared to be on the basis of race, and the leadership (coaching and management) of teams is still being monitored for racial representation and critiqued for the underrepresentation of blacks.

### **Reproduction/Early Confrontations with Marxism**

It was during this period of development that the influence of C. Wright Mills (1959) began to become apparent—both the duality of "private trouble/public issue" and the idea that "no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within society has completed its intellectual journey" (p. 4). The "social problems in athletics" perspective merged with critical theory to become indistinguishable—as evidenced in the best-selling textbook in the field (Coakley 1978, now in its ninth edition). Also, the "cultural turn" started here, and the sociology of sport began to take on an Anglo-Canadian critical theoretical perspective. These changes were reflected in the kind of research carried out.

Historical sociology of sport, following Mills's call for a temporal context, resulted in a number of important studies. These include sociologically informed studies of the origins and development of specific sports (e.g., Dunning's work on soccer and Dunning and Sheard's (1979) classic study of rugby) and theoretically informed studies of the social development of sport in Canada (Gruneau 1983) and the United States (Ingham 1978).

These studies examined the processes of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization in the second half of the nineteenth century and showed how the commercialization and professionalization of sport resulted. However, the reification of these processes tended to obscure the social relational struggles involved (see Hardy and Ingham 1983).

Establishing a temporal context inevitably led to consideration of the spatial context of the social development of sport. Initially, social historians considered the struggles over the use of urban space (e.g., Rosenzweig 1979; Hardy 1982; McDonald 1984). More recent studies of urban space relate primarily to stadium construction, and this resulted in a rich body of work from a political economy perspective (e.g., Lipsitz 1984; Ingham, Howell, and

Schilperoort 1987; Kidd 1995). Studies of the origins, development, and spread of sports are still being carried out, particularly by figurational sociologists exploring the civilizing process, parliamentarization, and sportization; and the ongoing use of public funds to finance Olympic facilities in various countries and professional sports stadia in the United States (Canadian taxpayers made it clear in the 1990s that they would no longer support such funding) continues to provide rich data for research.

Interpretive sociology, particularly in the form of research on sport subcultures, also developed during this period (see Donnelly 2000). Initially, this work took a "career" focus emphasizing professional sport subcultures (e.g., Ingham 1975; Theberge 1977). However, "career" subsequently came to be defined more broadly to include analyses of any time spent progressing in sport. Although this view of careers in sport was widely evident at the International Committee for the Sociology of Sport (now ISSA) Regional Conference in Vancouver, 1981 (Ingham and Broom 1982), two additional influences on sport subcultures research also became evident for the first time: (1) a shift to much richer and more nuanced ethnographic analyses exemplified by Geertz's (1973) approach to "thick description" and (2) more politicized and theorized analyses of sport subcultures derived from the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (England). Researchers in the sociology of sport were now beginning to show how, "subcultures, with their various 'establishment' and 'counter-cultural' emphases, have been constitutively inserted into the struggles, the forms of compliance and opposition, social reproduction and transformation, associated with changing patterns of social development" (Gruneau 1981:10). By the 1990s, subcultural research was beginning to focus on "alternative" sport subcultures such as skateboarding, snowboarding, and windsurfing.

A third strand of research that saw important changes during this period was the sociology of gender. By the end of the 1980s, Hargreaves (1990) was able to declare that "gender [was] on the sports agenda," and Birrell (1988) characterized the shift in approach during this period as being "from women in sport to gender relations." There was a brief period in the early 1980s when gender research took a critical political economy perspective (e.g., Bray 1984), showing how domestic labor carried out by women supported men's access to sport. This approach was picked up in the United Kingdom and New Zealand (e.g., Thompson 1999); however, much of the research in the United States still involved distributive analyses, supporting a liberal feminist search for "equality." Despite Birrell's theoretical declaration of "gender relations," few studies involved relational analyses. One of the most significant of these (Birrell and Richter 1987) involved a study of feminist softball leagues and placed the issue of feminist resistance to, and transformation of, "malestream" sport firmly on "the sports agenda." Studies of race and sport still largely involved distributive analyses, and there were no parallel theoretical

breakthroughs; and studies of social class all but disappeared during this period.

## Resistance/Cultural Studies

During this stage of development, the “cultural turn” was completed, and “cultural studies” became the predominant perspective in the sociology of sport. Major research trends evident during this period include media studies, sociology of the body, studies of masculinity, globalization studies, and an increasing number of ethnographic studies.

Media studies, up to this time, had largely taken the form of distributive analyses of gender coverage in the media. However, MacNeill (1988) and Duncan (1990) introduced the tools to enable a closer textual reading of photographs, text, and commentary, which showed how women were not only underrepresented and marginalized in the sports media but also sexualized and trivialized. Numerous studies have since applied these methodological tools to various sports media and events and have also gone beyond gender to consider representations of race, nationality, and violence in the sports media. Some of the more insightful media studies, however, took the form of case studies of specific incidents such as the following:

- Birrell and Cole (1990) on Renée Richards and the issue of transgendered athletes
- Kane and Disch (1993) on Lisa Olsen and the issue of female reporters in male professional team locker rooms
- King (1993) and Cole and Denney (1995) on Magic Johnson and AIDS
- McKay and Smith (1995) on the O. J. Simpson case
- Messner and Solomon (1993) on Sugar Ray Leonard and wife abuse
- Young (1986) on coverage of the 1984 soccer riot at Heysel Stadium in Belgium
- Theberge (1989) on media responses to violence at the 1987 World Junior Hockey Championships

The first production ethnographies (e.g., MacNeill 1996) added a whole new dimension of media analysis to the outpouring of textual analyses.

Since sport is such a completely embodied experience, it is surprising that the sociology of the body did not emerge earlier in the sociology of sport. However, research in this area was at least contemporary with a wider sociological interest in “the body,” and the “body” became the main theme (“The body and sport as contested terrain”) for the 1991 conference of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. Shilling (1993) affirmed that the athletic body was an important part of this field of study, and Pronger’s (2002) recent book *Body Fascism: Salvation in the Technology of Physical Fitness* captures current approaches to the body and exercise.

The emphasis on gender relations from a feminist perspective spurred male scholars to begin to consider gender relations from a masculine perspective. Connell (1987)

and Messner and Sabo (1990) raised the issue of “multiple masculinities” and sexualities (see Pronger 1990) and “showed that men were capable of deconstructing their own sexual politics” (Ingham and Donnelly 1997:389). The sociology of the body and the sociology of gender formed an obvious connection but also began to combine in an interesting way in a branch of research relating to “risk” and to sports injuries (see Young 2004). The high rate of injuries, the emphasis on treatment for rehabilitation rather than prevention, and the clear links that are made between playing with pain and injury and “character” have led a number of researchers to explore the “masculine” nature of that character, and to struggle to understand the recent complicity of female athletes in playing with pain and injury.

The shift to cultural studies led to an increased number of ethnographic studies of sport groups and subcultures and to the emergence of new qualitative methodologies (and an increased discussion of the politics of ethnography). Identity issues formed a major part of this research, and identity politics took an increasing part in research relating to gender, race, and sexuality.

Finally, identity politics were also evident as the sociology of sport began, at around the same time as mainstream sociology, to deal with globalization. This began with a debate (a series of articles responding to Maguire’s [1990] article on American football in Britain) about how to best approach globalization issues theoretically and was followed by a special issue of the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (Vol. 20, No. 3 1996) attempting to determine whether the primary process we were experiencing in sport was “globalization” or “Americanization.” The same issue also introduced the articulation of the local and the global in sport. A number of the topics noted above came together in a special issue of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* (Vol. 13, No. 4 1996) where “a postmodern shift in American cultural studies . . . resulted in concerns with consumption, commercialization, and images of race—all wrapped up around NIKE and Michael Jordan” (Ingham and Donnelly 1997:384).

## Recent Developments/Gaining Respect

The theoretical fragmentation described above, and characterized by Harvey (1990) as being “de l’ordre au conflit,” continues in the sociology of sport, and the subject matter now covers a wide spectrum of issues relating to sport, body culture, and social life.

Recent research issues that appear likely to continue into the future are discussed in the concluding section. What remains is to determine how the sociology of sport has won “respect” over the last 40 years.

There are now four English language journals devoted specifically to the sociology of sport—the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (now in its 40th year of continuous publication, making it older than many sociology journals) and the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*

are published by Sage in the United Kingdom and the United States, respectively; the *Sociology of Sport Journal* is published by Human Kinetics in the United States and *Sport in Society* is published by Taylor & Francis in the United Kingdom. Sociology of sport journals are published in other languages (e.g., Japanese), and sociology of sport research regularly appears in various social sciences, sociology, and physical education journals. There are now probably 40 to 50 books published in English each year relating to the sociology of sport, and several dozen textbooks and readers are available in English.

In addition to the International Sociology of Sport Association, there are major regional organizations such as the European Sociology of Sport Association, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport, and the Société de Sociologie du Sport de Langue Française. There are also national associations in a number of countries, including Japan and Korea, and interest in the sociology of sport is growing in places such as China and South America. In some countries, sociology of sport is a branch of the national sociological and/or physical education association. The sociology of sport associations hold annual conferences, and national and regional sociological associations frequently organize conference sessions on the sociology of sport.

This is by way of establishing that the sociology of sport is now a well-established subdiscipline, producing a great deal of research each year. Leading theorists such as Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu considered sport a legitimate field of study; leading publishers of sociological books and journals recognize the sociology of sport as a legitimate (and profitable) field of study; dictionaries, encyclopedias, and handbooks of sociology such as this one now often include the sociology of sport; and national and international sociological associations include the sociology of sport at their annual conferences. Clearly, a degree of “respect” has been won, and yet Maguire and Young (2002) recently pointed out that

over the past decade, despite some exceptions, sociologists have failed to emancipate themselves from the discipline's dominant value system in which primacy is given to work and the other so-called “serious” aspects of society. [Sport] is confined to the “non-serious” sphere. Rarely, if ever, is discussion of sport provided in introductory sociology texts. (P. 7)

## THE FUTURE OF SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT: “DISUNITY IN UNITY”?

Making predictions about the future is always risky, and the best that can be achieved is to attempt to “divine” the future from current events. Although the types of research outlined previously are continuing, there is also evidence that some changes are occurring. For example, there appears to be an increasing level of theoretical and methodological sophistication in analyses of the following:

- *Sport and globalization*: There are an increasing number of studies of the local-global nexus and an emerging area of research deals with sport and social development in developing nations.
- *Sport and social class*: This has reemerged as an area of study, employing both qualitative and quantitative data and theoretical approaches that are shedding new light on the relationship.
- *Community studies*: These are beginning to explore issues of sport and social capital, and to compare and contrast Bourdieu and Putnam in their approaches to the issue of community.
- *Sport and identity issues*. These are being problematized and theorized in new and interesting ways.
- *Race and ethnic relations*: Recent studies employing critical race theory and postcolonial theory suggest potential theoretical breakthroughs.
- *Democratization studies*: Issues of participation in sport, and barriers to participation, are being examined again in terms of, for example, social inclusion/exclusion.
- *Sport media studies*: In addition to ongoing content and textual analyses, there are an increasing number of audience and production studies.
- *Sport spectators*: There has been a reemergence of interest in spectators, using both survey and ethnographic methods.

There are also increasing signs of the reemergence of more traditional forms of sociology in the sociology of sport. This is not to say that cultural studies have not been sociological, but the adequacy of evidence has been limited in some postmodern approaches to research. Tilly (1997), writing with reference to the contrast between the relativism of some aspects of postmodernism and the accumulation of verifiable and reliable social knowledge, notes that postmodernism may undercut

all interpersonal procedures for assessing the relative validity of competing propositions about social life in general or in particular. It attacks any claim of superior knowledge and thereby removes all justification for the existence of social science as a distinctive enterprise. (P. 29)

Evidence for the reemergence of sociology lies in an increasing number of well-theorized quantitative studies; in several recent books exploring sport and social theory and the contributions of both classical and modern theorists to the study of sport (e.g., Maguire and Young 2002; Giulianotti 2004); in the very recent emergence of a Marxist studies group in the sociology of sport; and in more demanding reviews of research, especially concerning the adequacy of evidence and the limits of interpretation.

Finally, there is increasing evidence of “disunity in unity” in the sociology of sport. Not only is an extremely broad range of theoretical approaches, topics of research, and methodologies represented in the field but also there

are an increasing number of subfields of study. For example, “football studies” are growing in Europe, and this subfield has its own journal. Policy studies are also growing, spurred by an increasing number of research contracts with governments and sport organizations in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Norway and an increasing call by governments for “evidence-based social policy.” Despite Maguire and Young’s (2002) warning that such research will result in a loss of “the critical and sceptical character of sociology of sport” (p. 1), there

are no signs of this occurring. Research of this type is still dealing with key sociological issues such as social inequality and democratization, abuses of power (e.g., sexual harassment in sport), and community studies of, for example, volunteerism, which are concerned with the development of social capital. This diversity (disunity) is still, for the most part, holding together under the umbrella of sociology of sport. The field of study is now quite well established and, while there are internal stresses, there are no signs at this time that these cannot be negotiated.

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## POPULAR CULTURE

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Popular culture is a malleable concept. It can be thought of as folk culture produced by people as an expression of their values and modes of existence, and it can be the opposite, an ideologically laden product imposed by an elite class in a display of power and social control. Popular culture can be an ordinary part of everyday life as well as a site of intellectual and political struggle. It can be a participatory form within a community (actual or virtual) that engages the most populous mainstream in society, and it can be a mode of entertainment—an almost universal feature of most known societies. Wall painting, body decorating, singing, and gladiatorial sports from the ancient world can all be regarded as forms of popular culture, as can Rembrandt's cottage industry products and Shakespeare's seventeenth-century theater. Items for inclusion in the category of popular culture are now so diverse that no single definition contains them. Thus, popular culture refers to any demotic form that appeals to the populace at large, and as such, it can function as a social bond and folk culture that is expressive of the people. In its early form, from the sixteenth century, the popular also implied the lowly, vulgar, and common (Storey 2005:262). Popular culture can simultaneously refer as well to a mass media dedicated to spreading propaganda and political repression. In the modern era of industrial capitalism, it is an element in a vast commercial enterprise that both co-opts forms of rebellion and sustains an intellectual, creative class that might also be opposing it. When Andy

Warhol declared that modern art is "what you can get away with," he demonstrated the frangibility of the boundaries around art; in much the same way, the products of popular culture now exert similar category pressures, bringing emphasis to the problem of representation in the popular mainstream, of who is being addressed by the products, and who is the populace in *popular*.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the range of phenomena potentially covered by the term popular culture is such that its study is necessarily interdisciplinary and of interest not just to sociologists but also to a variety of area specialists in fields such as American studies (from which the *Journal of Popular Culture* has its origins), anthropologists, historians, and literary scholars. It has also generated new academic disciplines, including cultural studies, leisure studies, media and communication studies, and youth studies. It has been a focus of research and teaching in gender studies, where the question of how femininity and masculinity are socially and culturally constituted gives priority to issues of representation and everyday cultural practice. The coexistence of these new research and teaching disciplines with the older subfields in sociology from which some of them, at least in part, emerged (e.g., sociology of popular culture, sociology of cultural production, sociology of everyday life, sociology of education, sociology of gender, sociology of sport, and sociology of consumption) and with the more established disciplines of anthropology, history, and

literature makes the field of popular culture crowded and, at times, contested.

## THE FUTURE IS THE PAST

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The legacy of the ancient Greeks, of Plato and Aristotle, and the aesthetic products of the Renaissance have been largely eclipsed by the scientific revolutions of the seventeenth century onward. This has had the effect of separating the arts from science, creating dual cultures and knowledge systems that sometimes seem unrelated, and a consequence of the separation has been a quest for a science of human behavior and society. Yet such measures are elusive. A sense of progress is largely based on a belief that there are measurable trends in social organization and administration that build on the achievements of earlier societies. Estimates of the value of popular culture as contributing to the improvement and civilizing of society become implicated in these debates. For instance, those elements of popular culture that encourage greater liberalism in the circulation of knowledge and more democratic social practices can be used to signify increased levels of human progress. With the busy commercialism of the eighteenth century and the profound changes it brought to mechanics and technology, there was a comprehensive renovation of the individual's everyday experiences. Ideas now circulated widely through coffeehouses in London, Paris, and Venice; clubs and philosophical societies sprang up in provincial towns; the closed and elite position of the artist and patron had begun to change; commercial theaters flourished, as did dealers in engravings, paintings, silverware, and furniture. Publishers, merchants, and shopkeepers became part of an intellectual revolution that made the social meaning and status of art objects of fresh interest to the urban dweller. City life was not just about surviving dense living quarters and compromised hygienic conditions; it also involved the emergence of a middle class and the commercialization of taste and the arts. The material and technical changes of the modern world brought new ways of thinking about and experiencing pleasure, which in turn directly influenced what we now understand as popular culture and its capacity to shape society.

Sociology's engagement with popular culture was framed in the first instance by the opposition between "community" and "society," through which the discipline organized understanding of the transition from feudalism and agriculture to capitalism and industry. Popular culture produced by ordinary people (the folk) was part of the charm of community; popular culture produced as a commodity for "the masses" was part of the attenuated life-world of society. These oppositions of community/society and folk/mass are imbued with nostalgia for enduring social relationships and "traditional" cultural practices that have been embedded in a hierarchically ordered rural life-world—the "fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions" swept

away, as Marx and Engels (1930:17–36) put it, by capitalism's "constant revolutionizing of production."

In the nineteenth century, with the advent of technologies for mass communication, mapping the terrain of popular culture involved adding further layers and permutations to the meaning of the term, which could no longer be restricted to culture produced by "the people." The association of popular culture with widely recognized celebrity figures, material icons, and forms of social knowledge that are widely distributed through mass societies was under way by the early twentieth century with the expansion of communication technologies (film, radio, photography) and their increasing commercialization. Through the second half of the twentieth century, revolutionary developments in electronic and information communication technology allowed for increasingly rapid distribution of this culture across the globe. In effect, this lifts popular culture out of a local context (where it was situated prior to the nineteenth century) and relocates it on a global stage. The cultural industries (e.g., the Hollywood film studios and transnational telco networks) with their vast technological reach have made popular culture a defining feature of what Marshall McLuhan (1964) termed "the global village."

Both sociology and popular culture in its mass-produced form were products of the same historical conjuncture—namely, the industrial revolution and its associated social, cultural, and political upheavals. The language of social fragmentation and moral disintegration that underpins discussion of the relocation of rural populations into industrial cities thus framed interpretation of their commodified leisure pursuits as less worthy than the folk traditions that preceded them. According to Raymond Williams (1961:17), the idea of "culture" as it emerged in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was conceptualized as a transcendent sphere of noninstrumental value from which the increasingly rationalized, commodified, and environmentally polluted lifeworld of industrial capitalism could be judged. Whether from Herder's (2002) understanding of "folk culture" or Matthew Arnold's (1935) sense of high culture as a bulwark against anarchy, culture was positioned in opposition to the masses. This was a neat ideological reversal in which the historical actors who suffered most in the transition to capitalist modernity were deemed responsible for its sometimes impoverishing cultural consequences. As bearers of "mass culture," uprooted peasants, remade as urban workers and a swelling underclass, were positioned as barbarians within the gates—a threat not only to social and political order but to "civilization" itself.

## MASS SOCIETY BECOMES POPULAR CULTURE

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The sociology of popular culture separates from the sociology of the mass society at the point where the

relationship between high culture and popular culture loses its simple homology with class division and assumes a more complex symbiotic relationship that generates new definitions of taste. The creation of the mass audience from the 1920s, largely through the popularity of Hollywood films, solidified yet another cultural fissure, extending the one created between 1890 and 1930 by the avant-garde of Rimbaud, Joyce, and Picasso. The separation of high, mass, and avant-garde tastes made it clear that cultural messages of any kind cannot be dissociated from the social conditions from which they arise. The popularity of contemporary forms such as the cinema, sitcom TV, and fashion magazines seems to advance the ideological appeals of materialist capitalism. The Frankfurt School, in particular, championed much of the avant-garde as the conscious minority who were resisting the standardization that came with the mass production and consumption of products from the American culture industries.

The sociology of popular culture in its contemporary form draws on the early work of Raymond Williams (1961), who redefined culture to include a new layer of meaning—namely, the structure of feeling. Williams rightly pointed out that how people thought and felt about themselves and others played a singularly important role in shaping everyday culture. It was not sufficient to study social institutions, such as the family, and the organization of production; it was also necessary to understand how members of society communicated, acquired ideas and tastes, expressed views, and felt engaged in society.

By definition, whatever is popular has a large audience and is well received by huge numbers of people. In the twenty-first century, the popular is most often produced by professionals (such as journalists, musicians, and filmmakers) to appeal to global audiences that traverse various local cultures. In this context, questions about the nature of popular culture that relate to its production and audience (e.g., the question of whether popular culture is produced by the people for themselves as a kind of folk culture) represent viewpoints more useful prior to the eighteenth century. Thereafter, popular culture has been understood as those ideas and entertainments that win the attention of a mass audience, and as such, it is a manufactured form of entertainment and idiomatic knowledge often characterized as being inferior to other, more highbrow or elite forms. It can then be imbued with sinister intentions; for instance, it can be thought of as a tool in a political armory designed to be a form of entertainment that is made easily available to keep the masses distracted and diverted.

Embedded in these views are assumptions that culture originating from the lower social orders, or appealing *en masse* to a mainstream, is both less interesting than highbrow culture and more heavily freighted with ideology. It also assumes that popular culture can be understood and interpreted properly from the vantage point of those in an elite intellectual position. Yet popular culture is not a homogeneous form; it has contradictions within itself as well as a range of diverse forms. A new manner of

thinking about popular culture was provided by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, established in 1964 under the leadership of Richard Hoggart, who had lovingly documented the working class culture of his youth in *The Uses of Literacy* (1958). Hoggart's approach was in direct opposition to the perspectives expressed by T. S. Eliot (1948) and F. R. Leavis (1948), who argued for a top-down approach to the civilizing influences of culture. Hoggart's construction of the working class and its cultural practices and preferences was a major factor in defining the populist agenda of popular culture in the British context. He made explicit the link between the study of popular culture and representations of class and the distribution of privilege. He asserted the importance of art and culture as the means by which much of the individual's quality of life was revealed. Learning to read objects and practices in a critical manner was the key to understanding society. The dominant elite classes had expressed their own views through a monopoly over culture, and these values had been taken for granted. Now with the establishment of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the canonical elite forms of high culture were transposed into sites of cultural struggle as new modes of seeing were being developed. Across the Atlantic, other social analysts and theorists were at work reshaping views toward the popular and, in so doing, changing the sociological landscape of everyday modern life.

In the first half of the twentieth century and into the 1960s, the study of popular culture in sociology can be located in terms of three broad traditions. Within Parsonian structural functionalism, emphasis on system maintenance gave popular culture one of two functions: "value integration" or "tension management." Popular events and practices were judged according to the effectiveness of their contribution to one or the other of these outcomes. Within Marxism, the location of popular culture in the ideological superstructure carried similar implications. For instance, if the ideas of any age are the ideas of the "ruling class," then a shift in the popular, from forms of expression and practices embedded in the lifeworld of "the folk" to forms of amusement and entertainment produced under industrial conditions as commodities for sale to the masses, has the politically serious consequence of positioning popular culture as a means of rendering the dominant system of class relations palatable to subordinate groups. The idea of the popular being resistive had not yet formulated itself within this perspective. With symbolic interactionism and the Chicago School, the notion of "subculture" did focus attention on social actors and the construction of meaning and, thus, marked the beginning of a more complex way of understanding the individual's real or immediate social experience. Such perspectives promised to incorporate the quirkiness of the private and the diversity of individual value positions into the sociological project (Truzzi 1968). Had this been a more successful maneuver, it might well have anticipated much of the success enjoyed by the subdiscipline of cultural studies some three decades later.

However, the specter of social fragmentation and moral decline hovered over early studies such as Paul Cressey's (1969) study of commercialized recreation and the inner city, *The Taxi-Dance Hall*, and this aura persisted into the mid-1960s, thus positioning popular culture more as a "social problem," as evidenced by the inclusion of Howard Becker's (1963) study of dance musicians in *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* and Herbert Gans's essay on popular culture in America in the edited collection *Social Problems: A Modern Approach* (Becker 1966).

## CONTEMPORARY POPULAR CULTURE

One of the defining moments in the sociology of popular culture was the relocation of scholars from the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research to temporary accommodation at Columbia University in New York in the mid-1930s. As exiles from Nazi Germany, they had seen a popular movement that was morally corrupt and rancid; thus, their critical engagement with American popular culture was framed by an acute sense of the capacity of radio and film to mobilize audiences to support wrong-headed causes such as fascism. In the United States, they argued, the technologies of mass communication served the interests of capitalism. In coining the term "culture industry" (Jay 1973:216) to describe the "non-spontaneous, reified, phony culture" churned out as entertainment by Hollywood and Tin Pan Alley, they shifted the terms of debate on the politics of the popular from "mass taste" to the conditions of its production. *Popular culture* was deemed an ideological misnomer for the products of a profoundly undemocratic industry characterized by centralized control, distance between audience and performers (the star system), standardization, instrumental orientation, and affirmation of existing social privileges. In contrast to conservative critics of mass culture, who argued that democracy leveled taste to the lowest common denominator (e.g., de Tocqueville 1966; Ortega y Gasset [1948] 1968), the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School framed the problem in terms of capitalist social and economic relations and technological rationality. They saw the culture industry as extending capitalist domination into all areas of life,

subordinating in the same way and to the same end all areas of intellectual creation, by occupying men's sense from the time they leave the factory in the evening to the time they clock in again the next morning with matter that bears the impress of the labor process they themselves have to sustain throughout the day. (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 1979:131)

Whether the product was cars or culture, the technology of mass production was inseparable from "the rationale of domination" underpinning "the coercive nature of society alienated from itself." "Automobiles, bombs and movies," they argued, "keep the whole thing together" (Horkheimer and Adorno [1947] 1979:121).

While the Frankfurt School critique of the culture industry was of a piece with the arguments on "mass society" being put forward by David Reisman's (1964) *The Lonely Crowd* and C. Wright Mills's (1959) *The Power Elite*, it was less than palatable to a generation of sociological and cultural theorists who had grown up with television and regarded rock 'n' roll as "an instrument of opposition and liberation" (Gedron 1986:19). Their commitment to the resistive force of rock 'n' roll was particularly strong if their reading of the Frankfurt position extended no further than Adorno's ([1941] 2002) quarrelsome essay "On Popular Music" or his offensively ethnocentric essay "On Jazz" (published under the pseudonym of Hektor Rottweiler). This interpretation of Adorno's essays on popular music and jazz so offended them that they read no further. Yet Herbert Marcuse's (1964) *One-Dimensional Man* presented a similarly bleak view of the capitalist domination gained through the broad appeal of entertainment and consumer goods, but as he was writing in the 1960s, after living 30 years in California, he was not writing from the position of social dislocation and culture shock that must have colored Adorno's views on American culture. While Adorno was reviled as a cultural elitist, Marcuse's concepts of "co-option" and "repressive tolerance" became part of the language of the New Left.

Marcuse (1964) lamented the infusion of the consumer ethic into the popular imagination: "People recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment" (p. 24). His argument that "the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry" is part of a commodity culture that serves to "bind the consumers, more or less pleasantly to the producers, and through the latter to the whole" (p. 12) is faithful to the spirit of Horkheimer and Adorno. Yet at the same time, his thesis that radical students and blacks were bearers of the revolutionary mission from which consumption had seduced the working class gave de facto recognition to a new cultural politics in which popular music, underground comics, and films were capable of expressing and mobilizing opposition to capitalism, albeit in commodity form. The Frankfurt School thesis on a culture industry uniformly affirmative of capitalism was destabilized by the advent of the New Left, whose members listened to Bob Dylan and The Doors, read Karl Marx, and reframed the Hollywood movies of the 1930s and 1940s as "classics" celebrated by directors of the French "nouvelle vague."

A sociology of popular culture based on rejection of the mass society model emerged in the 1960s, as the first generation to grow up with television and rock 'n' roll arrived at university and graduate schools. This was a period of expansion in higher education and the extension of access to students from the working class, many of whom were the first in their family to attend university. While the emotional dynamics of social mobility are complex, and there is no necessary connection to be made between being from the working class and identifying with its "taste culture"



(Gans 1974:68), nonetheless, a space was being made in which a new twist in the social significance of popular culture was about to take shape. This new generation of students was also eager to consume the popular culture of its own making. It did not accept the theoretical approach to popular culture, which defined one's own tastes and practices as inferior, and the idea that popular music served to pacify the masses did not generate much enthusiasm; indeed, this was particularly unconvincing given the equation of rock music with youth rebellion.

The new generation of students in the early 1960s overturned the theories about industrialized popular culture and the mass society. The depiction of society as a vast mass of alienated and atomized individuals, who were undifferentiated from one another and unable to overcome a nameless loneliness, was about to be swept away. Reisman's (1964) depiction of modern America in *The Lonely Crowd* was replaced with the communities of Woodstock. Feminism, gay liberation, identity politics, and race debates shattered the sense of homogeneity that permeated the economic expansionism of the suburban 1950s and set in motion the mannerisms of thinking that would arrive at French poststructuralism and postmodernism and threaten the Anglo-American discipline of sociology with theoretical eclipse.

One obvious consequence of the social, cultural, and political movements that defined the 1960s as a transformative decade was a new relation between popular culture and the academy. While earlier generations of sociologists had approached popular culture from the outside, and by implication from "above," the post-1960s generation were more likely to share its codes and values. Popular culture was in that sense normalized as part of everyday life rather than positioned as a "problem" to be interrogated for signs of social pathology. Changes in technologies of production were also implicated in rejection of the mass culture approach, which made less sense as Fordist conditions of mass production and consumption were rendered obsolete by new electronic and information technology that made it possible for producers of all manner of goods to cultivate "niche" and "subcultural" markets.

Work associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies exemplifies this shift in focus. There was a sense in which both the critique of mass culture and the culture industry thesis can be read as denigrating popular taste and, by implication, the people who have it. It might therefore be argued that dismissal of the Frankfurt School critique as an "elitist defence of high culture" is fuelled by a sense of class "injury" (Sennett and Cobb 1972) that produces selective (mis)reading—passing over barbed remarks about art galleries and "classical music" and taking umbrage at the perceived insult to ordinary people and their pleasures.

Yet there were significant similarities between the Frankfurt and Birmingham traditions, as Douglas Kellner (1995) astutely noted, in terms of a shared interest in how culture and consumption served to integrate the working

class into capitalism. But whereas the Frankfurt School's culture industry thesis allowed no scope for resistance, the Birmingham School adopted Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and counterhegemony to position popular culture as a site of struggle between the forces of hegemonic domination and counterhegemonic resistance. Stuart Hall's (1980) influential essay "Encoding/Decoding" argued that people are active "readers" of media texts, decoding messages in one of three ways: (1) a dominant or "preferred" reading, which accepts the intended message; (2) a "negotiated" reading, in which some elements of a message are accepted and others opposed; and (3) an "oppositional" reading, which is opposed to the way the "encoder" of the message intended it to be read. Watching television was thus redefined as an active process involving the production of meaning rather than the consumption of capitalist ideology, and viewers could no longer be written off as couch potatoes or cultural dopes. In the same way, Birmingham School studies of subcultures (e.g., Hebdige 1979; Willis 1978) involve what Miller and McHoul (1998) aptly describe as a shift from "culture as a tool of domination" to "culture as a tool of empowerment" (p. 14) with subordinate groups appropriating commercial popular culture for their own ends, which invariably entail "resistance" to the dominant order.

The emergence of another contiguous field, the sociology of consumption, has added further dimensions to the study of popular culture. In this vein, John Fiske (1989) draws on Michel de Certeau's (1988:127) understanding of consumption as a form of secondary production to extend the argument on appropriation so that popular culture can be seen as being produced by its consumers. In his view, "popular culture in industrial societies is contradictory to its core" because it is produced and distributed as a commodity by "a profit-motivated industry," but at the same time, it is "of the people," whose choices determine whether or not the products of the culture industry are "popular." In support of his position, Fiske (1989) points to "the number of films, records and other products that the people make into expensive failures" (p. 23) and maintains that as a living, active process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system, popular culture cannot be imposed from without or above but indeed is "made by the people." From this point of view, what the culture industries produce is "a repertoire of texts or cultural resources for the various formations of the people to use or reject in the ongoing process of producing their popular culture" (p. 24). It might be argued that in the absence of power to define the repertoire of cultural resources from which "popular culture" is produced, consumer choice is a poor substitute for cultural democratization. As Kellner (1995) observed, "The texts, society, and system of production and reception disappear in the solipsistic ecstasy of the textual producer, in which there is no text outside of reading" (p. 168). Moreover, uncritical valorization of "oppositional reading," "resistance," and "audience pleasure" leaves out important questions of power

and value in relation to forms of cultural expression in which one group's resistance involves another's oppression.

## THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The maturation of popular culture as a proper field of sociological enquiry has seen a massive growth in its range of topics, from an analysis of the greeting card (Papson 1986) to football crowds and museum attendance (Bennett 1995), from gender advertising (Goffman 1972) to radio broadcasting and teen magazines (Johnson 1979; McRobbie 1991). As well as providing fascinating case studies of popular practices, this type of scholarship also alerts us to an underlying political agenda, and from sociological readings of such popular practices, we can identify systematic instances of social injustice, exclusion, and prejudice. Popular forms such as top 40 dance music, street fashions, skateboarding, Internet chat rooms, and "blogging" reveal complex social relationships and group identifications. Chris Jenks's (2005) sociology of culture brings the rigors of theory to illuminate how the contemporary urban experience can be understood as a shifting ground where the institutions of power and social order have been substantially destabilized by various innovations and, in particular, the impact of new technologies in communications.

Subsequently, it becomes more apparent that studies in popular culture can be portals to understanding the post-modern experience in a wider sense. It is not the case that popular culture is automatically about the simplest and most banal or only about the fashionable and fresh. For instance, the serialized production of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (1995) attracted at least 10 million viewers and subsequently has been broadcast in over 40 countries. The publisher of the novel sold 430,000 copies in the year following the television screening of the serial. Such an example of a popularized book, traditionally categorized as part of high-brow or elite culture, identifies new directions for studying the popular. In this instance, it points to the possibility that canonical products (Austen, Shakespeare) that are assumed to be part of an elite cultural field can be read differently and thus become expressions of rebellion and resistance to dominant conventions and manners of thinking. Reading against the grain and subverting the form can be modes through which we establish what we like and hence use the cultural form to reveal ourselves. Accordingly, the popularity of *Pride and Prejudice* might well indicate a form of refusal of the social disruption being associated with increased globalization during the 1990s. It could be argued that its depiction of local village life was a repudiation of the blurred boundaries and oceanic liberations that were washing over us with the advent of the Internet and instantaneous global communications. Austen's sympathetic view of provincial life, in contrast to the sophistication of London society, may well have appealed to the modern masses, who were experiencing an unnerving sense of

destabilization brought about by the vertigo induced by mass communications and the accompanying collapse of temporal and spatial divisions.

From the BBC version of Austen's novel in the mid-1990s to the parodic film *Bride and Prejudice* in the Bollywood genre in the twenty-first century, there are numerous examples of how items of traditional elite culture can be reformulated into popular versions and thereby come to support a continuous and often querulous reading of the world. The works of Austen, Shakespeare, and Mozart have been so repositioned, with the consequence that it is worth asking, Have these forms been co-opted into a nostalgic diversion that promotes the pleasures of domestic life? And can this be regarded as a disguised form of social control? Does such repositioning reveal the processes of bowdlerization that are so often apparent in popularization? Or, conversely, is the expanding category of popular culture a sign of maturation in the cultural capital of modern societies as products of our elite heritage are introduced and absorbed into mainstream life?

The impossibility of providing definitive answers that would allow us to take a firm stand either for or against popularizing appropriations of canonical texts lends support to Eva Illouz's (2003) argument that what she calls "pure critique"—the tradition of cultural criticism that holds popular culture to account in relation to a clearly articulated political or moral standpoint—is no longer an option. At the same time, she sees the "systematic ambivalence" of postmodernism as contrary to sociology's critical vocation—its necessary engagement with "the question of which social arrangements and meanings can enhance or cripple human creativity or freedom" (p. 207). Given the collapse of metanarratives through which cultural critics presumed to know in advance what texts "ought" to say and how, Illouz advocates the development of "impure critique," which engages with cultural practice from the inside instead of "counting the ways" in which popular culture promotes (or fails to promote) a given political agenda. She argues that as in psychoanalysis, critical understanding in the sociology of popular culture "ought to emerge from a subtle dialogue that challenges reality by understanding it from within its own set of meanings" (p. 213).

One such approach to the meaning of popular culture is provided by Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) study of carnival, which represents popular culture as a vision of the world seen from below. Carnival is a festive form of political critique of existing social hierarchies and modes of high culture. It can transform the world into a site of pleasure where the significance of economic alliances, political forces, and social conventions can become inverted and thus made into sources of parodic humor and entertainment. Bakhtin locates carnival most often in an urban setting, where there are opportunities for contestation and where it finds application to a variety of contemporary festivities such as street parades, county fairs, sports events, bicycle races, and walkathons. Such popular activities flourish in the more complex society of the town, where

commerce and the marketplace bring together individuals with different experiences and cultural consciences. From this mix of strangers, there is opportunity for outbreaks of the unpredictable, inadvertent, and humorous, which in turn produce varied forms of popular entertainment. Ordinary individuals are given access to a global media and subsequently perform themselves. Heroes of the day emerge and become instant celebrities.

Contemporary popular culture in the West has been dominated by a celebrity culture that elevates individuals into icons of practice: Greta Garbo, Marilyn Monroe, Mick Jagger, Andy Warhol, Bart Simpson, Jerry Seinfeld, Michael Jordan, and so on become archetypes of modern values. They are instruments in the production of popular culture, and at the same time, they function as hinges or switching points where mainstream values can be derailed and rerouted. Through their (often unintentional) personal influence, we can see the networks through which the arts, music, cinema, bookselling, publishing, television, and magazines are interleaved. The spate of reality television programs has most recently introduced an intensified self-reflexivity into popular culture that echoes certain practices from the Renaissance, when *carnivale* drew attention to the fragility of status and the social order and showed how easily it could be inverted. The globally popular reality TV program *Big Brother*, for example, can be seen as “carnavalesque,” in that it generates a widespread interest in the banal and ordinary, which in turn is revealed to be much more diverse and contested than expected. Thus, in the heterogeneous spaces of the metropolis, individuals with different cultural experiences and values are brought together in clashes of language, speech patterns, behavioral habits, and conventions. When this occurs, the spectator or viewer is made a witness to difference and, in turn, is consequently made more self-aware. These displays of contrasted styles of conducting business, thinking about the world, and living in it build a foundation for forms of entertainment and culture that are engaging, entertaining, and socially creative and have a wide popular appeal.

In a parallel manner, when Georg Simmel (1900) analyzed metropolitan life in the early decades of the twentieth century, he identified stock characters such as the dude who slavishly followed fashion, the rich property owner who had delusions of grandeur, and the downtrodden poor and social castoffs who were bestialized, and he used these stereotypes to characterize the carnivalesque qualities of contemporary social life. Such stock characters mirror many of those presented in popular television and mainstream cinema—for example, the unpredictable, lunatic politician; the incompetent judge; the hen-pecked husband; the quack medical doctor; the sexually wayward priest; the simple-minded corporate executive; and the incompetent boss. These types become figures of fun for an audience that laughs at the incompetence of those who generally hold greater economic power and social prestige. Such entertainments, like competitive sports, supposedly function as safety valves in a society where values are

thought to be held in common and where instances of dysfunctionality and *schadenfreuden* (common in television sitcoms) work to restore the social balance and reaffirm social cohesion.

In contrast, such interpretations of popular culture as sources of self-management and self-critique can be refigured to show that some forms of the popular function in oppositional ways, such as being expressions of resentment and hostility to others. For instance, displays of mayhem and rebellion in popular entertainments can act as challenges to authority and thus articulate hostility and repugnance toward the stranger and lower orders, such as women, Jews, gypsies, dogs, and cats (Darnton 1986). Certain forms of popular culture appear to demonize those who are different or who have less social status. In this way, popular culture is essentially conservative, acting to maintain the imbalance between a privileged elite and the masses. This darker, sometimes sinister side of popular culture characterizes the differences and expressions of resistive contra-subcultures, such as those found in religious cults, music groups, bikies, drug users, and nomadic feral surfers, as collectively repugnant.

## END THOUGHTS

The field of popular culture is much traversed by classifications and categorizations. It has become a site where politics and aesthetics mingle freely. The old distinctions of high and popular, elite and mass cultures are destabilized by the recognition that the arts are a form of political mobilization. From this perspective, distinctions in tastes are no longer just preferences intimately linked to biographical circumstances but also practices that reflect social and political viewpoints. Shakespeare and opera can thus be presented as high culture or adapted to popular and street forms, which raises the question, What circumstances and interests are at work in shifting specific art forms into new expressive locations? How do these reevaluations occur and what viewpoints are being presented through them? When, for instance, did opera and the live theater move from the popular into the elite category? Is the categorization of music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and dance as the fine arts, as distinguished from craft and the mechanical arts, still convincing, particularly when we think of dance as hip hop and sculpture as welded plates of steel and fused concrete?

Montesquieu, in Diderot's ([1774] 1984) *Encyclopédie*, argued that the fine arts were distinguishable because they produced sensations of pleasure. With this definition, he asserted a marriage between aesthetics and the emotions. Immanuel Kant (1800) elaborated this point in *Kritik der Urteilskraft* by suggesting that beauty and the arts corresponded to definitions of truth and goodness. Subsequent debates on the nature of the sublime resonate through studies of culture, but importantly, these are relatively recent issues linked with other developments in the sciences,

commerce, and technology. After all, it was not until the eighteenth century that high culture became an acceptable category, separate and distinguishable from more banal popular forms.

It was a concern of the eighteenth century, and it remains a concern now, that distinguishing between commercial culture and popular culture is difficult. For those concerned with the loss of regional and provincial cultural forms, such as folk dancing and singing, or styles of food preparation, we could now read the risks to some indigenous cultures. The modern cultural form produced from artifice and overrefinement threatens to overshadow the indigenous art form, making it seem a quaint and narrowly focused object. The pursuit of wealth through commerce produces an environment in which age-old skills and ways of seeing are easily surpassed. A nostalgic primitivism that upholds the “noble savage” is as much a part of popular culture as are the overproduced techniques for self-improvement, do-it-yourself kits, and commercialized signs of status and snobbery. In short, to understand popular culture, it is necessary to unravel—at the individual level—the connections between economic acquisition, pleasure, and social distinction and the desires associated with the fashionable life, along with the growth of audiences who seem variously willing to purchase entertainment, pleasure, and status. At the structural level, popular

culture has become such an economic powerhouse that it has political consequences. In the mid-twentieth century, the House UnAmerican Activities Committee provided a vivid instance of the political power attributed to the culture industries, and again a similar debate erupted in the last decades of the twentieth century, when the National Endowment for the Arts came under scrutiny by the American government and radical artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe and Karen Findlay were accused of corrupting the morals and minds of their audiences.

Popular culture as a series of practices has had a tempestuous past ever since its economic and political dimensions have been uncovered. So it was in the sixteenth century, when the Parisian printing apprentices murdered the totems of the aristocracy in the great cat massacre (Darnton 1986), and so it continues with current debates about the causal relationship between video games and the subsequent violent behavior of their audiences. Scholars of popular culture from the various disciplines of anthropology, sociology, history, literary studies, media, and so on function as analysts of art forms and the history of aesthetics as much as of political movements and social insurgency. The position of popular culture in the modern world is now inextricably linked with international politics and the global economy, and this makes it an irresistible focus for sustained sociological attention.

## THE PRODUCTION OF CULTURE PERSPECTIVE

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First articulated in the 1970s, the production of culture (POC) perspective focuses on the ways in which human beings organize the production of expressive symbols (e.g., art, literature, music, video) and how that organization of production affects the nature and content of what is produced. For example, the requirements of capitalist industrial organizational arrangements may produce symbols quite different from those in a pre-industrial society. Likewise, within the same society, the social arrangements surrounding the production of visual art may work in the same manner as those of book publishing and music production or differently. And changes in production processes and arrangements over time will affect content as well.

This emergence of the POC perspective took place in a sociological world in which culture, particularly culture as carried in expressive symbols, was not the center of attention. Beginning in the late 1930s, the dominance of the Chicago School, with its “process” model of cultural interpretation, was under attack from those concerned with social structure (Matthews 1989). By the 1970s, structural approaches had seized the mainstream, in part because of their quantitative measurement potential. However, as Matthews (1989) points out, symbolic interactionism and labeling theory were there too. At the same time, the “critique of mass culture,” which had focused on expressive symbols, if only to celebrate high culture over “mass” (or “brutal”) culture (Jacobs 1959), was having its last gasp in the face of more relativistic approaches (Gans 1999; Mukerji 1979) and the 1960s’ radical attack on traditional institutions.

Also by the 1970s, the U.S. version of media effects research, with its search for specific effects from specific

messages, had largely come up empty (Peterson 1979). And within sociology, much of the analysis of the content of symbolic culture was labeled as the study of “popular culture” and often denigrated. If the sociology of deviance was pejoratively labeled as being about “nuts and sluts,” studies of popular culture often seemed to fall into the “images of aliens in popular films of the 1950s” ilk.

In this context, the sociology of culture was being done but had moved to the margins. As outlined by Peterson in his seminal piece “Revitalizing the Culture Concept” (Peterson 1979), four major perspectives on culture coexisted within the field: “Culture Mirrors Society”; “Homo Pictor” (expressive symbols are critical to creating and recreating society); “Manipulated Code” (cultural symbols serve to maintain or change the power structure); and “the Production of Culture.” A common thread running through three of these perspectives was an explicit focus on expressive symbols, whether it be their creation, manipulation, or reception. However, in the United States, by far the most dominant of these was a “culture mirrors society” formulation that was part of both the structural-functionalist perspective and Marxist approaches.

For structural functionalists, culture was mainly about norms and values specifying role performance (Hall and Neitz 1993). In this context, the structure of roles and statuses that make up society is the focus, and culture is relatively less problematic. In other words, the important aspects of culture manifest themselves in social structure. For Marxists, culture was epiphenomenal and therefore less of a focus than what is going on in the base of society.

By the late 1980s, sociologists were expressing surprised delight over the resurgence of culture within the

discipline (Wuthnow and Witten 1988). This resurgence can be credited in large part to work in the POC perspective and its articulation in 1976 in a special issue of the *American Behavioral Scientist*, edited by Richard A. Peterson. This edited volume was then republished as part of the *Sage Contemporary Social Issues Series* (Peterson 1976). A special issue of the journal *Social Research* on the production of culture, edited by Lewis Coser, followed in 1978. However, in contrast to Peterson, who framed the production framework as an emerging and exciting body of research showing how the context and processes of production affect content, Coser's vision was more limited. In his "Editor's Introduction" (Coser 1978), he sees the value of the production perspective as being in its ability to shed light on the high culture/popular culture distinction, a distinction that was, in fact, already becoming a nonissue for sociologists. Thus, it was Peterson's vision, that culture could be brought back in through what was essentially an organizational sociology mode of inquiry, that "stuck."

Although it had been written a decade earlier, one of the early works that could be claimed by promoters of the perspective as illustrative of its power was Harrison and Cynthia White's *Canvases and Careers: Institutional Change in the French Painting World* (White and White 1965). This remarkable book, while it annoyed art historians with its lack of attention to aesthetic valuation (Haskell 1965), showed the usefulness of the production perspective for offering alternative explanations to the accepted canons of explanation for artistic movements. In this work, the Whites show how the rise of French Impressionism was influenced as much by the collapse of the French Academy as by "natural" changes in aesthetic logic at the hand of artistic genius. By examining the construction of artistic careers within the context of organizational processes of the day, the Whites provided a template for future POC research.

However, the greatest promise of the POC perspective was in its linking to a larger body of theory and research on complex organizations, occupations and careers, and industrial sociology. Early works by Paul Hirsch, including his 1969 book, *The Structure of the Popular Music Industry: The Filtering Process by which Records Are Preselected for Public Consumption* (Hirsch 1969), his 1972 *American Journal of Sociology* piece, "Processing Fads and Fashions" (Hirsch 1972), and articles in *The Nation* (Hirsch 1970) and the *American Behavioral Scientist* (Hirsch 1971) were also key in developing this link. Hirsch examined the popular music industry while linking to the organizational work of Charles Perrow (1967) and, in particular, the organizational-set analysis of James Thompson (Thompson 1967). Likewise, Peterson and Berger's 1971 *Administrative Science Quarterly* piece, "Entrepreneurship in Organizations: Evidence from the Popular Music Industry" (Peterson and Berger 1971), contributed directly to the then emerging organizational environment perspective. However, while much of the POC literature deals with industries, organizations, and occupations, ultimately relatively few were to explicitly build on

the potential of these early studies to link to the larger literature (some exceptions include Anand and Peterson 2000; DiMaggio 1991; Dowd 2004; Peterson and Berger 1971, 1996; Powell 1988; Ryan 1985).

So sure was Peterson of the ability of the POC perspective to "mainstream" culture in sociology that he argued (Peterson 1979) that there was no need for a "sociology of culture" subdiscipline, a subdiscipline that is now well-established within the field. Nevertheless, Peterson was able to articulate a coherent framework for analyzing culture production. Initially called *contingencies* (Peterson 1979), the earliest formulation was one of rewards, evaluation, organizational dynamics, market structure, and technology. Later (Peterson 1985), these became six constraints: law, technology, industry structure, organizational structure, market, and occupational careers. While recognizing the reciprocal and often simultaneous influences of these factors in the production process, Peterson offered the constraints as a convenient analytical framework for separating out the various factors. It is along the lines of these factors in the production of symbolic cultural products that the remainder of this chapter is organized.

In the following paragraphs are some classic and more contemporary illustrations of each of the constraints in operation. These examples are drawn almost exclusively from the United States. Cross-cultural comparisons are underdeveloped in the field and beyond the scope of this article. As noted in the foregoing, while each constraint is analytically distinct, in practice the constraints form an interlocking system in which change in one constraint affects one or more of the others. Thus it will become apparent that some examples placed in one section could just as easily be placed in one or more of the others.

## LAW (AND REGULATION)

Symbol production systems that are formally organized into industries are situated in a larger milieu of law and regulation. From censorship laws, to conceptions of freedom of the press, to regulations regarding media ownership, the law is an important constraint on the production of expressive symbols. What is produced, who is allowed to produce it, and under what circumstances, are all influenced by law and regulation. Sometimes the legal/regulatory system does so directly by censoring content. But, more often, it does so indirectly. To cite just a few examples, the law influences the POC in the following ways: (1) through the outright banning of certain products or, more commonly, through mandating rating systems, and warning labels that can lead producers to alter their products to achieve a particular rating for access to a particular audience; (2) by creating and implementing tax laws that affect where producers physically locate, and what is held or not held in inventory; (3) by creating and implementing regulations regarding ownership that affect levels of competition and, therefore, producing organizations'

strategies for creators and consumers; and (4) through the use of copyright law that acts as a mechanism for turning creative works into private property. Copyright law is of particular interest within the POC perspective because of its close ties to changes in technology. Copyright law became important when technology made it possible to easily reproduce symbolic cultural products, and new interpretations of copyright are negotiated in response to changes in technology.

Because copyright law is the mechanism for transforming symbolic expressions into private property, it is the foundation on which our for-profit mass media industries are built. Without copyright law, it would be less possible to make a profit from books, television programs, music recordings, and movies. Copyright law is central to the POC because the fate of entire industries can hang on its interpretation.

When copyrighted works are copied without permission, the costs can be enormous. But the consequences of new technologies of reproduction are often difficult to see. For example, in an earlier era, Sony's Betamax video recorder was attacked by Universal Studios and the Walt Disney Corporation as a violation of copyright law. Both sides saw controlling the technology as crucial to their success (Luckenbill 1995). In a case that went before the U.S. Supreme Court, Sony won, and Universal and Disney "lost." However, by losing, they later found themselves enjoying a multibillion dollar revenue stream in the home viewing market (Epstein 2006).

Not only does copyright law affect *who* can make a living and *how* he or she makes it within culture production, *what* is created, that is, the creative content, can be affected as well. A classic study showing the importance of copyright law in shaping the content of cultural products is Griswold (1991). Her study is worth discussing in some detail here because it so nicely illustrates that seemingly mundane and technical changes in production milieus can have significant effects on content. Griswold begins with the observation that literary critics have long noted the difference in style and content of nineteenth-century British and American novels. The British novels tended to focus more on love, marriage, and middle-class domestic life, while the American novels focused more on a rugged male protagonist combating nature, the supernatural, or organized society. Humanistic analyses typically located these differences in American and British national character. However, Griswold points to copyright as the catalyst for change.

Prior to 1891, the U.S. copyright law did not protect foreign authors. Because American publishers were not required to pay royalties to foreign authors, it was more profitable for them to publish books by these foreign authors. To compete, American authors had to provide publishers with a product different from that of their English counterparts. Through content analysis, Griswold shows that, beginning in 1891, when the United States signed the international copyright agreement giving

protection to foreign authors, the themes begin to converge. American novels now had themes similar to those of the British authors. The logic was that, because of the new agreement mandating payment to foreign authors, American publishers lost their incentive to promote foreign authors over native authors. American authors, in turn, lost their incentive to remain in niche markets.

Digital sampling provides a contemporary example of the relationship between copyright law and content. Sampling, the direct quoting of recordings of previous works in a new composition, has been made progressively easier and more accurate by the advance of sound reproduction technologies. For example, early electronic music composers in the 1940s used the new medium of tape recording to splice together bits of prerecorded tape into new compositions. The samples were often "looped" in such a way that they played for a continuous period. This same analog technique was used with success by the Beatles in some of their recordings (Martin 1979).

Digital sampling first appeared on the scene in the late 1970s, and, in subsequent years, technology made sampling progressively easier and less expensive while allowing the making of an *exact* duplicate of a recording. This technology helped drive forward the creative use of previously recorded works, especially in rap music. However, various court interpretations of copyright law have placed considerable burdens on sampling and have created an industry centered on the "clearing" of samples through licensing and collecting royalties for copyright holders (Krasilovsky and Shemel 2003).

Sampling was dealt a particularly serious blow when, in 2004, the 6th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in the case of Bridgeport Music and others versus Dimension Films essentially mandated a license for all samples, no matter how small (Keyboard, Online Edition 2005). The cost of using an unlicensed sample is significant. Well before the Bridgeport case, rapper Vanilla Ice lost all his royalties for his hit song "Ice Ice Baby" when courts ruled that his sampling of the bass line and melody of the Queen/David Bowie recording "Under Pressure" constituted copyright infringement. At the same time, the costs for using a sample legally are not inconsequential. At the time of writing this, the cost of a license to use the material can be as low as \$250 and as high as \$10,000 and may even entail giving up a percentage of future royalties.

As a practical matter, only sampling that obviously "quotes" other works is vulnerable since more minor samples are difficult to detect. But restrictions on this type of quoting are significant. In fact, some of the most creative work in rap has involved quoting. For example, Public Enemy's 1988 release, "It Takes a Nation of Millions," combines hundreds of quotes into a new and critically acclaimed creative product. However, in the late 1980s copyright holders began to demand royalties for the use of such samples. As Public Enemy member Chuck D puts it, "Public Enemy was affected because it is too expensive to defend against a claim. So we had to change our whole

style, the style of 'It Takes a Nation' and 'Fear of a Black Planet,' by 1991" (McLeod 2004).

In another example of the impact of copyright on culture production, in 2003, DJ Danger Mouse layered vocals from rapper Jay-Z's "Black Album" on top of the rhythms and chords from the Beatles's "White Album," releasing 3,000 copies. "The Grey Album" quickly became an underground hit, and MTV called it a "cultural landmark" (MTV 2004). However, EMI Records, owners of the copyright for "White Album," sent a "cease and desist" letter to DJ Danger Mouse, as well as to Web sites and record stores that were making the recording available. This resulted in an Internet protest known as "Grey Tuesday" in which copies of the album were made available for free download on more than 100 sites while other Web sites were turned gray for a day.

The point is that creative works are situated in what Schumacher (1995) terms "the politics of authorship" (p. 263), and one of the arenas where these politics are played out is copyright law. Not surprisingly, organizations spend considerable resources attempting to influence these definitions in such a way as to protect and enhance capital (Leyshon et al. 2005). And the larger point is that the creators and creative industries exist in a legal milieu that both constrains and enables creativity.

## TECHNOLOGY

As the previous section suggests, issues of law in culture production are closely intertwined with innovations in technology. From the artist's brush to the musician's instrument to the computer mouse and software, the "tools of the trade" affect the creative process.

Peterson and Ryan (2003) trace the impact of technology in music production and consumption from the advent of music notation in the eleventh century to the invention and mass production of the piano in the nineteenth century, through the early recording and radio industries, and into the digital age. The impact of the phonograph record on music nicely illustrates the interaction of technology with market, another of the six constraints, and their combined impact on symbolic culture.

One of the effects was due to the fact that, to exploit the economic potential of the new phonograph technology, merchandisers attempted to market recorded music to discreet demographic groups. In the process, relatively clear lines replaced what had once been blurred lines between genres (see also Ennis 1992). Other effects noted by Peterson and Ryan included more rapid changes in musical genres as new innovations were disseminated more rapidly and widely, greater musical cross-fertilization among musicians, new tastes among a public exposed to a greater variety of music than ever before, and the creation of new ways of making a living for musicians and business entrepreneurs.

Technology also affected the social arrangements for making music. Early difficulties in amplifying sound in such a way that it could be adequately recorded had

privileged some instruments and singing voices over others. The introduction, in the 1920s, of the electrical microphone solved these problems and allowed new creative possibilities. However, this technology also created new problems (Read and Welch 1976; Ryan and Hughes 2006).

For example, the new technology allowed softer singing styles and softer instruments to be heard. Unfortunately, the new microphones were also adept at picking up unwanted noise from the environment, necessitating the building of dedicated recording studios. Because of this need for control of extraneous noise, dedicated sound-recording studios became critically important sites in music production. Not only did they contain the necessary recording technology, in time many became known for their own particular sound characteristics and links to local music cultures. However, new technologies in the form of home studio recording and networked "virtual" studios have lessened their impact (Theberge 2004).

Other examples of the importance of technology in the creation process abound. The introduction of tape recording after World War II, and then the introduction of the ever-increasingly sophisticated multitrack recorder in the 1960s and 1970s helped to turn the recording process itself into an art form (Ryan and Hughes 2006; Ryan and Peterson 1993). In literature production, the personal computer and word processor have greatly enhanced opportunities for self-production, in motion pictures the compact video camera has had a similar effect, as has the digital camera in photography, and in visual art the personal computer and graphics software have opened the door to new creative forms. And all these media now use the Internet as a form of distribution. This latter phenomenon points to the fact that technology is more than a creative tool. As we shall see in the following sections, technological change often drives changes in both industry and organizational structure.

## INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

*Industry structure* refers to the number and size of firms competing in a particular organizational production field (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). For example, one could look at the number of book publishers operating nationally or the number of competing retail bookstores operating in a given locality. A particular concern of those working in the POC perspective has been the effect of industry structure on creativity and innovation. This question has become increasingly important as symbol-creating industries have worked to take advantage of technological change through mergers seeking to maximize "convergence" and vertical and horizontal integration. In this context, a key question, examined across a number of cultural fields, is the relationship between competition and diversity. For example, considerable attention has been paid in the literature to what are considered to be negative effects of large media organization mergers that reduce the number of players in any particular production field. There has been particular



concern about the negative effects of oligopolies on television and newspaper news divisions (see, e.g., Bagdikian 2004; Gans 1999; Hoynes 2001; Law, Harvey, and Kemp 2002). However, in a contrary view, Gamson and Latteier (2004) argue that mergers don't necessarily harm diversity, and Rossman (2004) found that censorship of a controversial country music recording group came more from independent stations than from large chains. New developments, such as the proliferation of Internet "blogs" or diaries, suggest for some a future in which news may bypass the large media news divisions altogether.

In a seminal study that tested theories from the literature on the economics of innovation, Peterson and Berger (1975) examined the relationship between the number of firms in the music industry over time, and innovation. They found that when fewer firms controlled the market, they tended to be more conservative and less innovative. This is because, to some degree, they perceived that they had a "lock" on the market for a particular product for which there was sufficient demand. However, this conservative strategy gradually alienated portions of the market for popular music until a level of available audience was reached that provided incentive for new, smaller firms to move in and innovate musically and with new artists, attempting to capture that market. Eventually, the larger firms would respond with innovations of their own, buy up the smaller firms, and return the industry to a condition of oligopoly. Peterson and Berger were able to show this cycle repeating itself through time in the music industry.

This provocative piece has led to several replications, including Lopes (1992), Peterson and Berger's (1996) own replication, and Dowd (2004). In the latter study, Dowd shows how organizational structure, specifically centralized production versus decentralized production, mediates the relationship between industry structure and innovation.

Using time-series analysis, Dowd shows that a high concentration of firms reduces the number of new performers. This centralized production characterized the industry when Peterson and Berger carried out their original study. However, when production is decentralized into semi-autonomous divisions, represented by semi-independent "labels" in the recording industry, the negative relationship between concentration and innovation is weakened or eliminated. At the time of writing this, only four firms dominate music production, signifying a strong oligopolistic system. However, a strategy of outsourcing elements of production to subsidiary labels and independent suppliers creates an effect mimicking inter-firm competition. Thus, it is not only the organizational topography of the industry that is important for culture production. The internal structuring of organizations is important as well.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

As noted previously, much of the creative work of symbolic culture production takes place in the context of

for-profit or nonprofit complex organizations. Culture-producing organizations face some particular problems that affect their form and way of doing business. Chief among these is what Perrow (1967) terms the "un-analyzability" or inability to rationalize the creative aspects of production that characterizes expressive symbol production. As a result, culture-producing organizations tend toward an "organic form," often seen in skilled trades and craft production. This is a form where creative personnel must be loosely supervised so that they are given room to create, but, at the same time, they must be closely managed enough to meet organizational requirements for usable products. In culture-producing organizations a typical solution to this challenge is to employ "boundary spanning personnel," editors, directors, producers, music publishers, artists and repertoire personnel, art dealers, talent agents, and so on, who can mediate between the organization and the artist (Ryan and Wentworth 1998). Thus, a major theme for those working in the POC perspective is how creative work is organized in various fields as well as how the internal structures and cultures of producing organizations affect what is produced.

Focusing on production in the country music industry, Ryan and Peterson (1982) show how, using an organic "job-shop" structure (Peterson and Ryan 1983) made up of mostly temporary alliances, work is organized into a "decision chain" linking creative inputs, distributors, and consumers. The system is designed to weed out what is, from those responsible for marketing and distributing output, an inevitable oversupply of creative raw material.

Oversupply is a key ingredient in most culture production because there is so little knowledge about which products will be successful, and yet, innovation is necessary because many cultural products have a comparatively short "shelf life." Rather than producers having a firm and consistent view of audience taste, the main effort at each stage of production was centered on what Ryan and Peterson (1982) term a "product image." The product image refers to conceptions of what characteristics a product must have to be acceptable to decision makers at the next stage in the process.

The exact nature of organizational logics and structures can vary across cultural fields and across genres within the same field. So, for example, country music-producing organizations have evolved some relatively stable sets of practices and organization (Peterson and White 1979, 1981), while rap music has resisted such rationalization. Negus (1998, 1999) has shown how the fluid affiliations among rap performers, as well as the creative use of the appropriation of the work of others through sampling noted previously, have strained the organizational logics of ownership that dominate major music companies.

In an example of the relationship between technology and organization, and following in the tradition of Tuchman's (1978) fieldwork in news organization fieldwork in the 1970s, Klinenberg (2005) shows how the convergence of Internet technology with traditional forms of

news gathering has altered the news. He examines the impact of four trends on news production: (1) the transformation of what were formally privately held news companies into publicly held companies; (2) the hiring of professional news managers tasked to increase efficiency; (3) significant investments in digital technology; and (4) increased horizontal integration among various media (movies, books, television networks) within the larger organization. One outcome of these organizational innovations has been a thinning of news staffs and an increased use of freelance personnel. These changes in the use of personnel have resulted from synergies created by the mergers. For example, in situations where it is possible for personnel to produce news content for multiple outlets (a process known as convergence), this has reduced the number of reporters needed.

Within this new constellation of personnel, Klinenberg shows how news-gathering routines have been altered in a number of important ways. For example, the time available for producing and gathering the news has been shortened as technologically enabled 24-hour news outlets voraciously consume new material. Convergence has led to increased emphasis on graphics that can be used across multiple media, while reporters have to learn to work across media. Time constraints for reporters have resulted in a reduction in the number of investigative stories and a corresponding increased use of online sources. And, finally, demands to deliver particular markets to advertisers have led to a decline in foreign news, and “localized” versions of newspapers.

In the same way, Epstein (2006) shows how the mega mergers have affected motion pictures. Here too, the pursuit of convergence means that products are shaped by the fact that money is made in many more ways than just bringing audiences to theaters. Where once the pursuit of ticket sales drove the creative process, now it is the pursuit of video games, fast-food tie-ins, soundtrack sales, theme-park rides, and DVD and video sales that are significant.

## CAREERS

Research in the POC perspective has shown that the ways careers are made and sustained in a production field is another key component within the production process. The norms for constructing careers affects the roles available in the process, who is recruited into those roles, the type of training that is received, the rewards available, the creative routines followed, and so on. For example, Ryan and Hughes (2006) discuss how the advent of sound-recording technology created the roles of the recording engineer and music producer. Often combined into one role in the beginning days of recording, the early aesthetic was to reproduce as accurately as possible the live performance of musicians. However, new technologies, in particular multitrack recording, helped elevate the role of the producer and altered aesthetic norms in such a way as to make the

recording something more than live performance. However, as Ryan and Hughes show, affordable digital recording technology, coupled with the Internet, has made it increasingly possible for musicians to self-produce their work and, in the process, bypass the professional producer and the traditional decision chain. Ryan and Hughes argue that the traditional creator/editor relationship, which some argue is necessary for producing great art, has been altered for many, perhaps to the detriment of at least some creators.

Another characteristic of culture production related to careers is that, in most instances, there is the requirement that there be known authorship—in other words, the value of the cultural product to the producing organization often resides in the reputation of its author. This is because the identity of the author essentially constitutes a sort of “brand” to the consumer. Consumers are not likely to get excited about “the new release from Sony,” but they may indeed be excited by a new release by a particular artist (Ryan and Wentworth 1998). At the same time, since audience response to innovation is relatively unanalyzable, the “track record” becomes the key ingredient in occupational access: Since neither the producing organization nor the audience have a good sense of what will capture the audience’s imagination, both tend to rely on those who have been successful in the past (Bielby and Bielby 1994).

The importance of authorship varies across cultural fields, and the nature of some collaborations means that true authorship is sometimes obscured. For example, motion pictures are the result of complex collaborations among producers, scriptwriters, cinematographers, sound engineers, actors, and directors. However, authorship is often assigned to the director (Allen and Lincoln 2004) for reasons of marketability and occupational norms. Similarly, in the music industry, it is often true that music recordings reflect the expertise of the producer as much as that of the recording artists. But, again, in most instances it is the artist’s name that serves as the brand for the product. Only in rare instances, for example in the case of a George Martin or a Phil Spector, does the producer receive anything akin to author credit except from true aficionados or industry insiders (Ryan and Hughes 2006).

Notions of authorship in POC careers are closely tied with issues of authenticity. Peterson (1997) has shown how the meaning of authenticity has been renegotiated in country music over the years. The sound of the recording is important, but so are the credentials of the performer. Where once being southern, uneducated, and rural were important to making it as a country artist, now simply alluding to such images is an essential mark of authenticity. Similar struggles for authenticity have been studied among Chicago blues musicians (Grazian 2004), jazz musicians (Lopes 1999), and, in what is perhaps the most contested area of authenticity negotiation, rap music (Harrison 2003).

Each field of culture production has norms for “breaking in.” For example, Peterson and Ryan (1983) describe

how, to break into country music songwriting, new writers are expected to coauthor songs with established writers, even when the latter contribute little more than their names to the composition. And race, gender, and age all matter in the construction of careers in culture production. For example, in rap, reggae, blues, and country music, race and socioeconomic origins are crucial factors in constructing authenticity. Lincoln and Allen (2004) have shown that gender and age constitute a sort of “double jeopardy” in film acting, with negative effects of being female and older on both the number and prominence of roles received. Similar negative effects of being nonwhite, female, and older have been found among film and television scriptwriters (Bielby and Bielby 1993, 1996, 2002).

Research in the POC perspective shows that the construction of occupational careers in culture-producing organizations is built on balancing the need for innovation with the organizational requirements of predictable supply and form. The research also shows that technology plays an important part in mass media occupations. Technology has eliminated some occupations, created others, and substantially changed still others. And the key point is that as culture production occupations change, so too do cultural products.

## MARKET

Thus far we have seen how, operating in a field of law and regulation, cultural industries engage in symbol-creation activities relying on such strategies as focusing on the track record of creators, employing boundary-spanning personnel as creative managers, and forming fluid project teams in an attempt to produce an orderly supply of properly formatted creative products. It is at this point that the audience enters the process. When patterns of culture consumption are examined, producing organizations like to say that they are simply “giving the audience what it wants.” This turns out to be not exactly true. Research in the POC has shown that producers construct a particular image of audience characteristics. In cultural industries, these beliefs are based on such factors as market or audience research, experience, and plain old “gut feelings” (Bielby and Bielby 1994; Gitlin 2000). This constructed image highlights some preferences and plays down others based on organization interests. It is this constructed image that the POC literature refers to as *market*, and the view is that markets are much more than economic entities.

One of the key insights of the POC perspective is that these constructions of *market*, or what producer’s “know” about their audience, are often faulty. For example, in 1984 the television networks ABC and CBS “knew” that sitcoms no longer appealed to audiences and that white Americans would not be interested in viewing a program about an upper middle-class black family. The show was turned down by both networks before being picked up by NBC (Gold 1985). Eventually titled “The Cosby Show,” it went

on to move NBC from last place to first place in the ratings, capturing a large white audience. Culture industry lore is full of examples of such spectacular miscalculations of audience preferences. For example, in 1965, Columbia Records “knew” that Bob Dylan’s six-minute-long recording “Like a Rolling Stone” was not suitable for release. The song became a major hit and has been lauded as one of the greatest rock recordings of all time (Marcus 2005).

However, at other times, intuitive notions of market pay off. Crewe (2003) shows how a small group of editors at men’s magazines successfully developed and promoted magazines aimed at what they believed to be “the new lad,” conceived of as a sort of role-playing stance between traditional and modern masculinity. This conception of the new lad was not based on market research but rather the personal experiences and intuitions of these few editors.

Even where industry personnel rely on more rigorous quantitative methods to uncover audience preferences, their vision is often obscured. For example, the Nielsen ratings are used to determine the fate of television programs costing millions to produce, as well as to make decisions affecting billions of dollars in advertising placements. However, the methodology and results have widely been criticized as faulty, producing a distorted picture of viewing habits (Milavsky 1992). Similarly, motion picture producers often rely on biased samples and poorly designed focus groups to make key decisions about their releases (Epstein 2006; Ryan and Wentworth 1998).

Anand and Peterson (2000) show how changes in market research methodology can have profound impacts on a cultural field. They tell of how, in 1958, the music industry trade magazine *Billboard* was able to define itself as the most important and objective source of music popularity data. For the next 30 years this data, in the form of the weekly *Billboard Charts*, was used to make decisions about the performance of organizational units and artists, and as a measure of audience taste. However, in the late 1980s, new bar code and scanning technology made it possible to change the methodology from self-reports from a sampling of music stores to “point of sale” data compiled electronically from each cash register transaction. *Billboard*, aligning itself with the Soundscan company (now Nielsen Soundscan), which had exclusive rights to the data, began publishing these point of sale rankings. The effects were dramatic. The new data showed that country music was much more popular than previously thought; the charts were more volatile, with albums moving on and off more quickly; and it was learned that consumer interest in new products developed more quickly than thought. The new technology also led to a decline in the power of independent labels and created a new measure for success within the industry, absolute sales versus relative chart position. Thus producers’ notions about their market were substantially altered by new sources of data.

It is not only the constructions of market by producers that are important within the POC. In for-profit media, content is often used primarily as a lure to bring desired

audiences to advertisers. Where producers are dependent either directly or indirectly on advertisers for funding, they must align their image of market with those of the advertiser. In this way, not all audience members are equal. In television, advertisers are generally seeking adults aged 18–49 but may specialize in some of the following ways: women aged 18–49, women aged 25–54, and adults aged 25–54 (Littleton 2005). In this context, when producers say there is “no market” for a program, they may be talking about absolute numbers, or they may be referring to an audience with particular demographic characteristics. For example, in 2005, CBS cancelled a series, *Joan of Arcadia*, both because its audience of 8 million viewers was “too small” and because that audience was “too old,” with a median age of 53.9 years (James 2005).

Digital technology has allowed new types of audience construction (Turow 2005). Where once advertisers focused on “tonnage” (the sheer size of the audience), there was a gradual move to audience segmentation-based “target-marketing” based on demographic characteristics, and lifestyle constructions. The increasing carrying capacity of satellite, cable, and Internet media systems has allowed the creation of specialized cultural products targeted at ever-narrowing slices of audience. At the same time, devices such as digital video recording and pop-up filters allow consumers to avoid advertisements and have initiated a new focus among marketers on what Turow (2005) calls “customer relationship management” (p. 113). Here marketers trade special services to customers in exchange for more intense and highly individualized surveillance of customer preferences. At the same time, Turow shows that service providers such as CNN.com, Google, and Yahoo are increasingly creating content in the hopes of creating virtual “walled gardens” within which consumers will conduct most of their consuming activities.

## SUMMARY

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The POC perspective was a key factor in bringing culture back to the mainstream in sociology. Its focus on the production side of the production/consumption relationship allowed direct links to the established subdisciplines of

organizational and industrial sociology, and the focus on structural constraints on creativity fit well with the prevailing perspective of the day. The key insight of the perspective was that in modern societies there is no simple correspondence between culture and society, thus undermining the classical “culture mirrors society” formulation. By showing how the daily practices of culture production are embedded in and shaped by a larger milieu of law, regulation, industry structure, organizational structure, technological change, and markets and careers, the POC perspective showed that to simply focus on culture consumption was to get a distorted view of society.

There are clear policy implications from such a perspective, while they are rarely drawn out. A common defense of the entertainment industry against the charges of reformers is that they are “simply giving the public what it wants.” The POC perspective shows that this is only partially true. Consumers are indeed ordering from a menu of cultural fare, but that menu is limited to items that serve the needs of the various contingencies of the production process. There are few opportunities for the audience to select from items not on the menu. The POC also has much to contribute to arts policy. The research clearly shows the important effects that copyright law, regulation, and technology have on artists’ careers and on the creative process.

Of course, there are weaknesses as well. While it was the link to research and theories in organizations and work that provided the greatest promise, relatively few studies actually make this link. Thus, many studies will discuss the behavior of culture-producing organizations but not compare this behavior with research and theory relating to organizations in general. Future research needs to do a better job of making this link. Not only do most studies in the POC tradition not link explicitly to the larger organizational literature, they often do not explicitly define themselves as POC. Rather, it is often left for POC researchers to collect studies focusing on one or more of the six constraints and provide the perspective as context. Most important, what remains to be done is to draw some general principles of the operation of production factors across culture production fields. Only then will the perspective do a better job of predicting, rather than just explaining, the effects of the production process on creative symbols.

## PART V

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### CREATIVE BEHAVIOR

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF ART

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The arts and sociology, as Pierre Bourdieu (1980:207) observed, make uneasy bedfellows. It is an unease that pervades American sociology even more than he imagined. We should bear in mind that barely two decades have elapsed since a handful of American Sociological Association members succeeded in convincing a necessary quorum of colleagues to sign the petition required to set up a new Section. The Culture Section's growth since then must have come as a surprise even to some of those early supporters.

Culture and the arts have become increasingly visible in sociological publications (Peterson 1976; Becker 1982; Crane 1987; Balfe 1993), disciplinary recognition (Griswold 2000), and professional organizations, both in the United States and elsewhere (Zolberg 1990). But despite the richly textured potential that the arts afford for social science disciplines, it appears that American sociologists continue to devote relatively little attention to them. The success of culture's reentry as a domain of considerable significance in American sociological investigation provides an opportune moment to reexamine the standing of the arts in what should be the most hospitable field of the discipline. This chapter provides an account of the persistent hesitancy to recognize the arts as central rather than peripheral in the social scientific field even in the face of the extraordinary promise that artistic transformations in the past century would seem to offer. The theme is that despite the increasing prominence of culture in the profession, the standing of the arts in American sociology appears to have changed less than might have been expected.

### STAGING THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE ARTS IN AMERICA

Less than a half century ago, a survey of the sociology of art would have begun and ended with contentiously worded assertions concerning the relationships of the arts and society. Certainly, many scholars affirmed that in some ways art mirrors society, but at that point consensus would end. Some insisted that art reflects societal production relationships, serving largely as an ideological tool to maintain dominant groups in favorable situations. Deriving from the materialist orientation of Karl Marx, who actually wrote little about the arts, that perspective provides the foundation of Arnold Hauser's (1951) massive analysis of artistic creativity through the ages, *The Social History of Art*. Other scholars, with equal certainty, maintained that great art should be treated as part of an autonomous sphere, surmounting material constraints, but in some way reflecting the spirit of its age. Certain versions of reflection analysis see art reaching for higher values, foretelling cultural and societal tendencies. Of the many anti-Marxist variants on this idea, the one elaborated by Pitirim Sorokin (1937), a work that preceded Hauser's by more than a decade, was nearly as massive.

As divergent as they are in their foundations, these interpretations of the relations of the arts and society aim to unearth hidden postulates of art in relation to broad social structural processes. Whether from the standpoint of Marxist analysis or anti-Marxist idealism, these are universalizing conceptions of art, representing a Western European, hierarchical scheme of cultural classification

(Bourdieu 2000:73, 105). Sorokin embraced 2,500 years of civilization; Hauser starts from the even earlier point—prehistoric cave painting—and both ended their analyses with their own artistic contemporaries. Neither passes muster in the face of modern anthropological perspectives, which see art as part of a cultural system, embedded in its cultural context (Geertz 1973). Regardless of the political or intellectual stance of individual scholars today, their ambitions are far more modest. They rarely undertake to encompass such magisterial breadth entailing so speculative an outlook. This does not necessarily result in a narrowing of vision, however, since the types of art that contemporary researchers consider worthy of analysis are far more varied than what their predecessors documented. Neither Hauser nor Sorokin paid much attention to non-Western civilizations, barely any at all to primitive and folk forms, and, except disparagingly, to commercial art and entertainment (Hauser 1982). Neither considered the absence of women artists a question worthy of scrutiny. Even within the domain of fine art, both shared a largely unexamined but generally unfavorable opinion of avant-garde art. Finally, like most of their more aesthetically oriented peers, although they dealt with changing genres and stylistic modes, they accepted extant categories of art as unproblematic givens, without considering that other creative forms might be valid for inclusion in the aesthetic field (Zolberg 1997). Yet beyond their ambitious reach, what is remarkable about the Hauser and Sorokin studies is that they were truly exceptional, since on the whole social scientists gave short shrift to the subject of art.

## ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERIPHERY

### Early Work in Sociology of Art

Even though American sociology had its origins in, and continued to look toward European theoretical formulations, aside from literary and aesthetic scholars who sometimes touched ever so lightly on the social contexts or cultural history surrounding the arts, in the first half of the twentieth century, the sociology of art was largely the concern of a few European scholars. A single major work by Max Weber (1958) dealt directly with a specific art form—music—as a case of his theory of cultural rationalization in the West. When Émile Durkheim founded his important publication, *Annales*, he situated what he termed “aesthetic sociology” within the sociology that he was trying to establish but only under the residual rubric “*divers*” and beyond considering it as part of the “elementary forms of the religious life” of aboriginal society, he himself did no study of it (Zolberg 1990:38). Only Georg Simmel (1968) wrote frequently about the arts, although less as a social scientist than as a literary and art critic, philosopher, or fashionable essayist (Coser 1965).

By the end of World War II, American sociology, along with American science more generally, became the most

dynamic and expansive in the world. This growth was a counterpart to the prominence of the United States on the international scene as the champion of Western humanist values during the war, and defender of freedom during the cold war (Guilbaut 1983; Saunders 1999).

American social scientific scholarship, however, hardly acknowledged the arts as a legitimate object of study. This stance had its nearly symmetrical correlative in the opposing and equally intransigent stance on the part of humanistic scholarship, including literature, aesthetics, art theory, musicology, and history of culture, toward what seemed the threat of the social sciences. The increasing preeminence of the exact sciences during and after the war had drawn many social scientists to adopt the presuppositions, techniques, and methodologies of these disciplines, an orientation that cast a shadow over humanistic subjects such as the arts, and qualitative interpretive methods that art calls for. Still, as higher education was expanded, despite official emphasis on the exact sciences, all university studies were made to grow, including the social sciences and the humanities.

### A New Moment in Late-20th Century Sociology

Until the post–World War II period, in the United States, the few scholars who did social studies of the arts were émigré scholars, especially members of the Frankfurt School, such as Theodor Adorno ([1962] 1976), who were escaping persecution by totalitarian states. Straddling the intersection of the humanities and social sciences, these exiles often remained marginal to mainstream intellectual life, were treated as outsiders, and saw themselves in that light (Wilson 1964:v). Their marginality was enhanced by the Marxist orientation to which some adhered, combined more generally with their critical views on American sociology’s “scientific empiricism,” and, in many cases, contempt for what they took to be its intellectual shallowness (Zolberg 1990:72). Most of them deplored the development of “mass society” and its impact on individual autonomy. Their insistence on taking an evaluative position in their social analysis, rejecting what they regarded as a fictive scientific objectivity, reinforced the exclusion they suffered from the academic mainstream of American sociology. Nevertheless, some of them attracted a following of American scholars, intrigued by and sympathetic to their inquiry in the spheres both of high culture and their critique of culture industries. Although the legacy of earlier misgiving persists, in recent times, it has become considerably muted because of changes in both sets of disciplines that have produced convergences in their orientations (Zolberg 1990).

## FOUNDATIONS FOR A NEW SOCIAL STUDY OF THE ARTS

Although in many European countries a considerable body of scholarship was devoted to aesthetics, it was only in the

post–World War II period that an autonomous field of sociology of art, distinct from philosophy, history, or criticism materialized. This was the case in France, as the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu ([1979] 1984) and Raymonde Moulin ([1967] 1987, 1992) provided important intellectual leadership and the French state gave institutional support. German philosophical, musicological, and art historical scholarship continued to straddle the social domain as successors to the Frankfurt School tradition for whom the arts, both fine and commercial, were foci of critical study. English literary and historical scholarship infused Raymond Williams's social analysis of what he saw as the hegemonic role of the arts and served to underpin the development of British culture studies. Williams led the way to open up the social study of the arts by introducing popular forms, such as the movies, radio, jazz, and more popular forms. In the United States, students and faculty who considered the university an agent of government policy, especially through its involvement in the Vietnam War, challenged what they suspected were biases of the social sciences.

Simultaneously, in relation to some of the same developments, the art world itself was undergoing transformation. The trend that had begun much earlier, for the center of the international art market to shift from Paris to New York became a reality in the immediate post–World War II period. As happened during World War I, when the arts were challenged by Marcel Duchamp's gathering of "found objects"—bathroom plumbing, snow shovels, bicycle wheels—and "assisting" them to the status of art by supplying them with titles and signatures by purported artists, in the 1950s the arts "exploded." Artists introduced new media, broke the barriers separating genres, and challenged conventional hierarchies, routinely wreaking havoc with artistic traditions, including even the historical avant-garde.

The material conditions that encouraged the entry of large numbers of aspiring artists into the avant-garde art world included growing foundation, corporate, and government support for the arts (Crane 1987). Political ideology played an important role in the form of cold war strategy by American advocates of government support for the arts, who successfully argued for creating a hospitable environment for artistic originality to serve as evidence of the creative freedom that was anathema under authoritarian regimes (Guilbaut 1983; Saunders 1999). Besides providing an opportunity structure for artists, indirectly, it opened the path for social scientists interested in culture, whose forays into studies of the arts gained some legitimacy.

On the basis of what had become "normal sociology" of the 1950s and 1960s, it would have been difficult to predict the efflorescence in the sociology of art that was in the offing. Prior to that time, aside from a few articles, no major sociological works had increased the small, pre-1950s bookshelf. An indication of the new trend appeared in the exploratory work, *The Arts in Society* a reader edited by Robert Wilson (1964), who wrote a number of its essays and solicited additional ones. Justifying his choices by

taking as his point of departure the fairly orthodox idea that artists could "often see what is going on in the society or the psyche a good bit earlier than other men do" (p. vi), he was unabashedly "concerned with the products and producers of high culture." Only a few years later, another collection of essays heralded an "institutional" approach that examines the functions of the arts in meeting human needs and maintaining social stability (Albrecht, Barnett, and Griff 1970). The editors included studies of the relationship of forms and styles to various social institutions; artists' careers and their interactions in a variety of artistic milieus; distribution and reward systems; the roles of critics, dealers, and the public in recognizing artists and works.

They were generously open to divergent views that encompassed even Marxian analysts. At the same time, however, these essays demonstrated the infancy of the field of sociology of art: of the authors represented, only one-fourth were actually sociologists, while the rest were in anthropology, comparative literature, history, art history, or were practicing artists, painters, dancers, writers. The happy result of this *omnium gatherum* was that Albrecht and his coauthors contributed to the creation of an American field that integrated European approaches and was strongly cross-disciplinary, ranging over the fine arts, classical and contemporary, as well as folk art, music, dance, and literature, and their corresponding institutional grounding.

## A SOCIOLOGICAL SPACE FOR ART: CURRENT TRENDS

In light of changes within sociology itself, as well as developments exogenous to the discipline, the sociology of art in the third millennium may be characterized by four trends. First, continuing from already tested frameworks, sociologists examine the roles of the institutions and processes that give rise to or constrain the emergence of artworks. Second, they analyze the artistic practice of creators and patterns of appreciation and acquisition of patrons and collectors. Third, they investigate degrees of access for diverse publics to the arts and the role of the arts in status reproduction. Fourth, in a radical shift, some scholars call into question the very nature of the category "Art," arguing that "art" needs to be understood not as self-evident but as a social construction. The rapid succession of art styles that has characterized nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe and the United States is taken by some to be emblematic of the innovativeness of modernity but by others as an indication of over-ripeness, cultural decadence, and anomie. For some observers, the entry of commercial art forms into galleries and museums (Cherbo 1997), the newly found respectability of previously denigrated musical forms such as jazz (Adorno 1976), the growing presence of non-Western music, simultaneously in commercial and serious musical domains, are a sign of



the West's decline. Many question whether these genres—new entrants to “Art”—deserve to be so designated (Zolberg 1990).

For sociologists of culture, generally more dispassionate than cultural critics, developments of this kind provide opportunities for research and theorizing that many analysts hope will help to understand the nature of societal transformations more generally. The use and misuse of aesthetic creation in the interest of particular groups or political ends is one of their recurring concerns (Gans 1974, 1999; Goldfarb 1982; Halle 1993). At the same time, the idea of a domain of art free from material purposes outside of itself remains a seemingly unrealizable ideal, both for artists and for publics more generally.

Methodological approaches range from an empiricism that relies on quantitative tools to analyze masses of available data, such as the degree of access to cultural resources (Blau 1988), survey data of art world practices, and audience studies (Gans 1974). Equally empirical, but based on microscopic observation and qualitative analysis of cultural practices, is the ethnography of Howard S. Becker's (1982) *Artworlds*. Historical and semiotic perspectives have been imported from literary analysis into the social studies. Even more striking is that the range of works and art forms investigated has burgeoned and includes the commercial domain—culture industry—as well as the more traditional fine arts (Peterson 1997). Increasingly, sociologists, following Gans (1974), recognize that the arts may exclude as well as include. The absence of certain classes of aspiring artists such as women and racial minorities from what were defined as the most distinguishing and distinguished art forms is no longer taken for granted (Bourdieu [1979] 1984).

In its most distinctive manifestation, American sociology of culture has synthesized approaches to the social study of science, religion, and work, under the rubric of the “production of culture” (Peterson 1976). Defining culture in a broadly pragmatic sense that allies it to anthropology, it comprises art, popular culture, science, religion, symbols or, more generally, meanings. Richard Peterson and his associates urged that the questions broached by scholars themselves determine the use of synchronic or diachronic modes according to their appropriateness. Proponents of the production of culture approach consider how cultural products were constituted, accentuating the effects of institutional and structural arrangements, both as facilitators of or impediments to creation. Characteristically, they prefer doing middle-range and microscopic analysis that, they believe, more effectively reveals the impact of laws, culture industry practices, and gatekeepers of the form and content of artworks.

### Institutions and Processes

Critics and artists have decried, virtually since their establishment, the role of certain institutions, such as official academies and government agencies or ministries that

are supposed to provide support for artistic creation. Following the pioneering sociological study by Harrison White and Cynthia White (1965), among the first to analyze systematically the changing structure of opportunity that the French Academy provided for artists of the French painting world in the nineteenth century, more recently, a study of how academies selected for exclusion was carried out by Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang (1990). Focusing on the revival of etching as an art form in the nineteenth century, they show how keeping out or severely limiting women as students and members by most European academies impeded their entry into the highly regarded world of oil painting. Diverted to other, lesser media, such as etching and watercolor, whose professional organizations were newer and less restrictive, aspiring women artists were able to launch careers and gain a measure of status and recognition.

Research on French art institutions has continued to thrive with the work of Raymonde Moulin on the interplay among art museums, the art market, and government policy in providing official recognition for innovative art (1992). In the United States, a system in which the national government's support for the arts is far more limited, and even declining, the study of how institutions affect the arts has advanced under the leadership of Paul DiMaggio (1986a, 1986b) and Judith Balfe (1993).

### Artistic Practices and Worlds of Art

The most significant contribution to understanding how the arts are constituted was Howard S. Becker's (1982) *Artworlds*. By adapting a “sociology of work” approach to study what is customarily viewed as unique creations of individual geniuses, Becker's premise is that making art is not qualitatively different from engagement in other social activities. Becker argues that far from being an individual act, the making of art needs to be understood as a collective process, in which interactions among participants, of whom the named artist is only one, result in the production of “artworks.” The other participants—support personnel—may range from assistants to servants, to managers or agents, critics, buyers, and organizations. Taking into account the size and complexity of modern societies, Becker does not reduce the arts to a single art world. Instead, he argues that art making is constituted in four principal art worlds, each characterized by a particular style of working, based on its own conventions. Thus, the integrated professional artist is trained according to the conventions of an art form such as music, painting, and dance, within the domain either of high culture or commercial. The Maverick is also trained according to those conventions but refuses to abide by them, preferring to risk isolation and failure to innovate on his own terms. The folk artist works within conventions traditional in his community's lore. Finally, outside of actual constituted art worlds, the least integrated is the naive artist, untrained in art who follows an internal urging to create works that represent

idiosyncratic experiences or ideas about religion, representations of personal remembrances, or even aberrations and madness. Whereas the other art worlds have ties to regular art world institutions or practitioners or make it their business to develop ties to them, naive artists must be “discovered” by others or else remain unknown (Becker 1982).

### Art and Its Publics: Status Reproduction and Taste

One of the most misleading adages of all time must be there’s no arguing about taste. In reality, taste is always being argued about. Thorstein Veblen (1934) had been one of the first social scientists to interpret the symbolic meanings of taste in his analysis of leisure class behavior during the Gilded Age. Approximately a half century later, Russell Lynes ([1949] 1980) published his classification of high-, middle-, and low-brow taste preferences, in which artworks and fashion are taken as status markers. On the basis of writings by these and other astute analysts, a number of sociologists have noted that taste, in art, design, and fashion may be a person’s social standing. Far from viewing taste as trivial, purely personal, and difficult to fathom because it is nonrational, sociologists such as Bourdieu contend that taste is social in its formation, symbolic in its expression, and has real social consequences for individuals and social institutions. In his more complex level of analysis, Bourdieu goes beyond the idea of taste as a “right” of consumerism. Instead, his observations of social differences in artistic taste enable him to show linkages among taste, symbolic status, and the mechanisms by which they tend to reproduce existing status hierarchies in society at large from generation to generation. Treating taste as an aspect of the individual’s cultural baggage, a durably structured behavioral orientation whose origin stems from early childhood experience in the family, and schooling, Bourdieu employs a variety of methods, quantitative and ethnographic, to show how taste functions as a form of capital to crystallize inequalities based on economic and social advantages or disadvantages. In this way, taste becomes a badge of social honor or, conversely, of scorn, signaling to influential groups that some are more acceptable than others (Bourdieu [1979] 1984, [1992] 1995).

English sociologists of culture have been pursuing cultural reproduction from a parallel perspective. Although they do not, as a rule, use large surveys of taste, many have analyzed the content and uses of aesthetic culture, both high and popular. Raymond Williams (1981), beginning from a Marxian perspective, and moving between literary or film criticism and academic life, was a major influence on what became the field of Culture Studies. Beyond the simple base-superstructure correspondence of Marxism, in which culture is conceived as merely epiphenomenal to existing production relationships, Williams, Stuart Hall (1980), and Janet Wolff (1984), among many others, conceived of culture as a constitutive practice in the construction of social meanings. They have tried to overcome the

prevailing, decontextualized, literary-critical mode of analysis by elucidating the relations between, on the one hand, cultural images, objects, and practices, and on the other, social institutions and processes. Scholars associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies analyzed many aspects of British youth subcultures, and their relationship to new artistic styles.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that there is complete agreement among sociologists about how taste and status are related, and with what consequences. Whereas Bourdieu attributes expertise in manipulating symbolic capital through complex codes available in the lore of dominant class fractions, many others prefer to emphasize observable changes in social stratification patterns, and the conditions of their expression. One of those who question Bourdieu’s analysis is David Halle (1993), who has studied the collection and display of art *inside* of people’s homes. His interviews with elite collectors of abstract art reveal that, contrary to Bourdieu’s assumption, collectors have little facility or understanding of the works they own. Indeed, such art is nearly as esoteric for them as for non-elites. Halle finds widespread sharing of taste across status lines, especially noting a nearly universal and, it appears, similar mode of appreciation of the landscape genre. Moreover, although educational level is an important enabler of high culture taste, ethnicity and race play important roles in how people select works for the home, in contrast to their responses to questionnaires administered in public spaces (Halle 1993).

Equally unexpected, in their studies of how musical tastes are related to occupational status, Peterson and Simkus suggest that although classical music continues to be a marker for high status occupational groups, more striking is the great breadth of their preference for a *variety* of music. Thus, whereas less than a third of respondents occupying prestigious occupations say they like classical music best, a somewhat larger proportion say they prefer country and Western music to grand opera. More “distinguishing” is that high-status individuals participate in more cultural activities and enjoy a wider range of music than do those of lesser status. As Peterson and Simkus put it, they are “omnivores” as opposed to less elite groups, whose range of taste in music is much more limited, and whom they characterize as “univores” (Peterson and Simkus 1993:152–86).

For scholars of Renaissance behavior, the omnivore is strongly reminiscent of the character type emergent with the “civilizing process” to which Norbert Elias (1978) devoted his early figurational analysis. In that period of expanded possibilities for travel in Europe as feudalism declined centralized states and monarchical structures began to form, promising young men (and rare women) from more or less isolated localities were being drawn to centers offering new opportunities. They had to learn to behave differently before a new audience and circles of courtly societies than they had in the familiar traditional worlds they inhabited, where their status (for better or for

worse), was secure. Cosmopolitanism and the idea of the Renaissance Man came to mark the ideal of behavior, giving rise to a virtual industry of etiquette books, epic poetry, and other literature by authorities such as Erasmus, Castiglione, Chaucer, Shakespeare (Elias 1978). To be considered a country bumpkin was disastrous for seekers after the Renaissance notion of fame. As Bourdieu points out, these qualities became institutionalized in the development of secondary and higher education from the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries, and remnants of this cultural structure persist despite, as Bourdieu noted, the twentieth century's valorization of science and technology (Bourdieu [1979] 1984).

### But What Is Art?

Finally, whereas in the past scholars investigating the place of the arts in society have taken for granted the categories of art conventionally agreed to by art world participants, in recent times certain sociologists have turned their attention to tracing how art classifications are constructed. Like the sociologist of science, Bruno Latour (1987), who questions the processes by which certain frameworks of analysis, categories, and findings come to be incorporated into the scientific canon, some see even more plausible reasons for interrogating how artistic canons are established. Art is a stake in the arena of competition that pervades much of social life, as Bourdieu contends, not only for artists themselves, but for their supporters, patrons, collectors, dealers, and for the writers and scholars who constitute the art worlds in which they exist. In recent times, under pressure from potential publics, market forces, including collectors, and political action, and in light of the openness of the fine arts to new media, existing cultural institutions, such as art museums, are exhibiting works previously excluded from consideration as Art. Previously, for example, African carvings were largely consigned to ethnological collections; now, their entry into art museums has taken the form of an upward spiral in prestige; art of the "insane" has attained high market value (Anne E. Bowler as cited in Zolberg and Cherbo 1997:11–36); and women artists are gaining a level of recognition that had routinely been denied them (Zolberg and Cherbo 1997:1–8). In the worlds of culture industry as well, new musical forms such as "Rock-n-roll" and Rap have emerged from the interplay of business developments, technological innovations, and enacted statutes in such fields as copyright law, which set the parameters for works to come to public attention (Ennis 1992:5–7).

The seemingly impermeable barrier between high art and popular art that took over a century to construct (Levine 1988) has since been breached countless times, not only in America but in Europe as well (Circle 1993:12). In the past three decades, even the massive wall between commercial art forms and the "disinterested" arts has endured a jolting to the point of crumbling. The entry of Latin American, Asian, and African visual and musical

forms and motifs into the Western dominated canon has gained increasing legitimacy and audiences (Zolberg 1997:53–72). Moreover, since any kind of art—fine, popular, commercial—may be disseminated through commercial channels of distribution, adding the interplay of official policy with market forces helps to thicken one's understanding of processes of democratization.

## 21ST CENTURY PROSPECTS FOR THE ARTS IN AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

By the beginning of the third millennium, the sociological study of culture and the arts is no longer a stepchild of the *serious* business of sociologists. If not central, then the arts are at least legitimately scholarly, as opposed to a frivolous subject. This flowering came about despite the traditional anti-aesthetic orientation in American social science and the more general unease between social science and the arts. Still, the position of the arts in the social science disciplines continues to remain tenuous and requires repeatedly renewed justification as an intellectual enterprise. In part, this is due to the fact that the crux of the arts since the Renaissance has been the artist as an individual, a tradition of several centuries that emphasizes the uniqueness of the actor and the work he (rarely, she) created. While the notion of such individual agency is relatively compatible with the discipline of psychology, it is less easily reconciled with the collectivist understanding of behavior by sociology. As noted above, this perception underlies the view of art as a collective process (Becker 1982) and sociologists' emphasis on the production rather than creation of culture. Retaining or reinserting the individual artist as a creative agent has both ethical importance, since it implies respect for the autonomy of the individual, and intellectual validity in a discipline that could easily reduce art to no more than an outcome of general structures and processes. Thus, whereas culture has become a deeply embedded component of sociology dealing with science, theory, macrohistorical questions, education, religion, ethnicity, to name a few, the place of the traditional fine arts has not grown proportionately.

Two edited books published under the aegis of the ASA Culture Section seem to confirm this observation. Whereas the first, Diana Crane's (1994) edited collection includes an essay on the arts, the second volume, edited by Elizabeth Long, includes not even one chapter on the fine arts and only one that even approaches this domain (Long 1997). On the other hand, the third and most recent collection of Culture Section sponsored essays suggests that the arts have conquered a new place in the sociological sun (Mark D. Jacobs and Nancy Weiss Hanrahan 2005). The coeditors rehearse the several decades in American social science characterized by "the cultural turn," the reconceptualization of culture away from the functionalist emphasis on the need for culture to bring about a homogeneous

consensus in society. Instead, proponents of the cultural turn sought variations and heterogeneity in the arrival on the public scene of pluralism and tolerance of difference. Rather than require uniformity, the goal is for a more “organic” (as in Durkheim’s formulation) conception to be the basis of social solidarity, not to promote conformity but individual human agency.

The cultural turn had challenged the elite standing of high culture by recognizing the existence of talent and striving among all social groups and the democratization embedded in Pragmatism. For all the attractiveness of openness to different forms, culture was frequently reduced to unending debate on ideology, functionalism, and essentialism versus constructivism. In a break from the past, Jacobs and Hanrahan (2005) put forth a new idea in the field of cultural sociology. They refer to “this newly emerging conception of culture as . . . an aesthetic one, which offers possibilities for intensifying and re-imagining the experience of civic life” (p. 12). From a static or, at the most, slowly changing notion of societal existence, their new approaches emphasize the dynamism of process and human intervention and their impact on existing traditional structures. Beyond these important changes, the new aesthetic conception helps, instead, in the more than two dozen essays by American, Canadian, European, and Asian sociologists, to turn toward normative commitments for the revival of civic discourse in relation to legality and social justice, the politics of recognition, and “the potentialities of ordinary experience” Jacobs and Hanrahan (2005).

### **Democratization in Diversity**

In the context of American idea systems, Peterson’s innovations and the efforts of others associated with the production of culture school are likely to continue to drive research. This approach prepares the way for scholars to enlarge their repertoire of questions and take into account the impact on creation and reception of the arts in light of the enormous changes in the ethnic make up of the American population since the end of World War II. Sources of immigration have been changed decisively by new laws and population movements: Hispanic, Chinese, Indian/Pakistani, Middle Eastern, Russian, peoples of a broad range of educational levels and aspirations. They provide an unprecedented opportunity to investigate the

interactions with the varied Anglo-centric cultural choices that have until now been the focus of most studies. Demands for access to elite culture now include not merely “visitors” from modest economic backgrounds, whose entry is far from being attained either in North America or in Europe (Circle 1993:96, 103, 129), but crosscutting socioeconomic distinctions, differences of gender, ethnicity, and race or religion. Each of these may have aesthetic implications that the conflict, as usually expressed—quantity versus quality—does not encompass.

The extraordinary transformation of the international arena in recent years requires that scholarship move more explicitly outside of the American scholarly world and into the wider international realm. This is essential in a world that brings together what had been largely national concerns. As is true of other intellectual fields, the arts are no longer understandable in terms of one society alone since few societies are either homogeneous or sealed off from other geographic, national, or societal units. Thus, whereas it may still be possible to study such issues as arts censorship in the context of a single society, it is more likely that political transformations open the door to new conflicts as global phenomena.

Related to globalization, technological innovations in cyberspace and computer technology militate even more poignantly against retaining the single society as the primary unit of analyses. They not only permit new forms of artistic expression but also enhance attempts to evade control over art content. Providing new avenues for artistic dissemination, they also substitute for direct contact with the storehouses of art, the museum. This suggests that this contextual metamorphosis will set the parameters of the next phase of studies in the sociology of the arts. Cultural sociologists have through theory, example, and practice contributed to the vital and potentially dangerous debates that pervade questions of “identity,” including ethnicity, gender, race, or religion, with strongly political loadings. Pursuing questions of meaning, identity, and value in terms of American society alone is clearly insufficient to understanding social processes and emergent structures. As American sociologists burst the bonds of narrow parochialism and enter the adventurous terrain of global processes, they foster a cosmopolitanism that challenges existing approaches and conceptualizations of the social sciences.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

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The sociology of knowledge has a history linked closely to the core concerns of the early paradigmatic exemplars of the sociological tradition. Indeed, the very first sociologists, from Comte and Spencer to Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, would often place knowledge, ideology, or collective values as an essential unit of analysis in their corresponding inquiries into society.<sup>1</sup> As such, the sociology of knowledge is ubiquitous with the growth and development of the discipline as a whole. This makes a definitive and exhaustive coverage of the sociology of knowledge impossible. Yet, in this chapter, we will present what we consider to be the most important themes that have emerged (and are emerging) from a contemporary perspective.

We will start here by laying out the basic historical background to the Durkheimian tradition, which emphasizes a social structural research agenda on ideas and knowledge. We will then go back in time to the Marxist critique of ideology and trace the history of the critical perspective on the sociology of knowledge that has led to today's poststructural, feminist, and critical theory traditions. We conclude this general overview of the field by discussing the rich diversity of studies on "local knowledge"—a research focus that crosscuts many of the various traditions of structural, critical, and postmodern analyses. The chapter concludes with a discussion of three new and exciting areas of growth and debate in the sociology of knowledge: a new normative focus, a global turn, and the

effort to theorize knowledge production as a collective social movement.

### ANALYZING STRUCTURES OF KNOWLEDGE

The pioneer of the study of structural knowledge is the French theorist and sociologist Émile Durkheim.<sup>2</sup> In Durkheim's ([1893] 1964) analysis of law in *The Division of Labour in Society*, he showed how societal norms do not emerge transcendently from the spiritual world, or through some rationally derived truth about some overarching universal morality, but are created according to the specific needs or functions of society at the time. In *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim's ([1912] 1965) classic study of religion, he illustrated how the content of primitive religious beliefs seem to parallel a society's historically situated organizational structure. Furthermore, he showed the importance of symbols and beliefs for the continued solidarity of members of society. Durkheim argued that knowledge can only come about from and through society and is thus conditioned largely by the sociohistorical milieu of which it is part. He also showed that the importance of this knowledge for the cohesion of the group is not only necessary in primitive religion but also, by extension, all institutions in modern society.

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Durkheim's consideration of the social basis of knowledge is seen most poignantly in his study of time (see Durkheim and Mauss 1963). Here, Durkheim and Mauss recognize the variation of temporal systems from culture to culture. Durkheim shows that a division of time is not something that is universal but rather derives from the different historical and structural elements of the community. Taking no unit of knowledge for granted, Durkheim and Mauss (1963) argue that "even ideas so abstract as those of time and space are, at each point in their history, closely connected with the corresponding social organization" (p. 88). Clearly, Durkheim and Mauss acknowledge that even the most basic pieces of knowledge are products of social organization and not pre-given Kantian categories. Gouldner (1965) adopted a Durkheimian-like macrostructural analysis in his sociological analysis of the development of Plato's philosophy (see Camic and Gross 2002b). Furthermore, there is a rich Durkheimian tradition that examines the social constitution of time and cognition (Sorokin 1943; Zerubavel 1997; Flaherty 1999).

Max Weber, a German contemporary of Durkheim, also made central contributions to the early sociological perspective on the structures of ideas and knowledge. Weber (1958) argued that ideas are absolutely central to sociological analysis, positing that it was the prevalence of Calvinist religious beliefs, not simply technological and industrial advancement, that led to the development of capitalism in the West (for critiques, see Hamilton 1996). This emphasis on values was influential to the work of Parsons (1937) in his development of a theory of the social system. Weber (1978) was deeply concerned with the increasing "rationalization of society" that would lead to an eventual "iron cage" of bureaucracy in modern society, a theme picked up later by Habermas (1987). Weber's direct focus on the rapid expansion of bureaucracy in modern society represented the first institutional analysis of how knowledge is organized, privileged, and sorted through rationally derived systems of accounting and control. Weber's historically specific and organizational analysis of knowledge remains enormously influential on some of the most important contemporary accounts of the relationship of values to social structure and religion today (see, e.g., Wuthnow 1989).

Following the tradition of Weber and Parsons, the first modern institutional approach to an empirical sociology of knowledge was developed by Robert Merton. Merton's doctoral dissertation was published as a book titled *Science, Technology, and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (Merton 1970). Inspired by Weber's (1958) account of the relation between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, Merton argues that the Puritan movement in England gave rise to the social conditions and value systems necessary for science. Merton drew historical linkages between Puritan thought and the values and methods prevalent in contemporary science. Later in his career, Merton (1973) studied how the values and norms

active in scientific institutions functioned. Merton (1968) later became interested in the reward systems of science, and showed vis-à-vis the "Mathew effect" that those who are held in high esteem in science tend to garner rewards more easily than their unknown competitors.

One of Merton's most important contributions was his identification of a set of shared institutional norms that allow science to run smoothly and produce knowledge effectively. Specifically, Merton (1942) identified four norms central to his "ethos" of modern science, including universalism, communism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism. Mulkay (1976) later argued that Merton built his model of norms not through observation or concrete empirical data but rather through a reliance on scientists' individual accounts, who, not surprisingly, present a fairly romantic, conventional, and essentially idealistic vision of science. Despite these shortcomings, Merton was able to provide an extensive set of theories and methods that can be used to study science at several levels, such as historical developments, contemporary institutional structures, and broader social dynamics (Cole 2004). Merton established a framework for an institutional sociology of knowledge and has left a lasting legacy of questions still to be researched with regard to the institutional and organizational underpinnings of knowledge cultures today (see Cole 1992; Merton 1996).

The study of the underlying structures of traditions of knowledge was reinvented in France by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu (1988, 1993) argued, in his study of literature, art, and the academy, that all fields play out through an underlying "set of rules" that are implicitly agreed on and reinforced as actors compete for prestige and status (for an explanation of field theory, see Martin 2003). While the content of a field may change drastically through the discourse of the "players," the underlying substructure of hierarchical positions tends to stay relatively stable. Through the development of a *habitus* (a product of conscious and unconscious dispositions gained through immersion in the field), actors are equipped to move up the hierarchy of positions. This perspective emphasizes the hidden power dynamics at work in disciplinary knowledge and shows that fields are made up of relational networks of actors, often in opposition to each other, in a hierarchical manner. Those near the top of the structural hierarchy have the necessary capital to define what is legitimate and valued within the field. This framework has inspired a great deal of contemporary work on the topic of disciplinary knowledge and reward systems in both the humanities and the sciences (see, e.g., Collins 1998; Albert 2003; Bourdieu 2004).

Bourdieu's strategy of conceptualizing the relational and oppositional networks of academia is akin to Randall Collins's (1998) agenda of a massive structural analysis of knowledge cultures, spanning ancient Chinese and Greek philosophy, up to the rise of the modern sciences. The argument is that there is only so much "attention space" in a field at any one given time, and as such, due to the "law

of small numbers,” it is only a small handful that are widely cited in a field and a select few that leave any sort of historical legacy. Collins turns the issue of intellectual success fully sociological and argues that it is not individual genius but rather one’s proximity and access to powerful networks that are most important. Collins shows that great intellects seldom come from nowhere but are connected to networks with high visibility to begin with. Furthermore, Collins depicts oppositional streams of thought (i.e., idealism vs. materialism) as an implicit (albeit subconscious) strategy for advancement in the field. Oppositional ideas are a way to get attention, reduce the importance of those already in the spotlight, and provide what seem like original ways forward. A similar notion is pursued by Andrew Abbott (2001) in *Chaos of Disciplines*. Abbott contends that knowledge evolves in fields following a law of oppositional fractals. By studying and diagramming the development of dualities in various fields of knowledge, Abbott shows that academic progress tends to be made by dividing the field into increasingly smaller fractal divisions. His recursive model of fractals shows that forms of knowledge that have their roots in direct opposition through the process of continual fractionalization, which eventually covers all possible combinations and divisions, leading to lots of ideas but, perhaps, few truly original and new discoveries.

Network analyses have also produced interesting results in their studies of disciplinary fields and knowledge. Price (1963) observed that modern science moves too quickly to rely on publication through books or even journal articles to keep up with the cutting edge of the field. As such, he argued that top scientists form “invisible colleges” (informal occupational networks through conferences and other communications) to be kept apprised of developments in the field. Crane (1972) later argued for the value of membership in these networks, arguing that it encourages drive, enthusiasm, solidarity, and interest in relevant issues. This is very close to Randall Collins’s (1998) later considerations of the cultural capital and emotional energy to be gained through collective ritual activity in scholarly networks. It is apparent that scholars with access to such informal ties to academic “in-groups” have a great deal to gain socially-psychologically as well as in terms of their structural position in relation to attention space alone. Many scholars have studied the role of scholarly networks by undertaking detailed citation analyses (Baldi 1998; Hargens 2000; Moody 2004). Furthermore, network analysis has been used to show the mutually reinforcing practices of the “prestige hierarchies” of various academic disciplines, including sociology (Hanneman 2001; Burris 2004). There are also important contributions to the sociology of knowledge that have, building on Simmel and Coser’s emphasis on the stranger, highlighted the role of relatively marginal thinkers and networks in the creation of new knowledge (Simmel 1950; Coser 1965; McLaughlin 2001). Ronald Burt (2004) has recently presented a

network analysis of an electronics company to show that one’s location at a bridge between clusters of ideas (such that the actor is a broker between clusters) increases the likelihood of that person filling “structural holes” and generating and presenting “good ideas” by providing information to one group that is gained from the other. Michael Farrell’s (2001) study of innovation among artists, writers, psychoanalysts, and political activists also stresses the potential creativity generated by thinkers on the margins.

Scholars have also used a more thoroughly institutional and organizational approach to understanding knowledge cultures, which has helped sociologists move beyond the issue of demarcation between science and nonscience. For example, Gieryn (1999) has analyzed the practice of “boundary work” that disciplines enact in an effort to gain and or protect their scientific legitimacy. Whitley (1984) has focused not on the content or peculiar intrinsic characteristics of science versus non-science but has considered how disciplines differ as organizational forms characterized by such measures as “task uncertainty” and “mutual dependence.” The argument is that the sciences tend to enjoy higher levels of mutual dependence (e.g., cumulative theorizing) and task certainty (shared agreement on assumptions and methods) than the social sciences. Whitley argues it is these organizational qualities and not the inherent nature of the subject matter that is most important in the demarcation of the disciplines. Stephan Fuchs (1992, 2001), inspired largely by the work of Luhmann (1982), Collins (1975), and Whitley (1984), has laid the groundwork for a series of empirical inquiries into science and knowledge with the use of an organizational framework. Using Collins’s notions of tight versus loose networks, and Whitley’s organizational variables, Fuchs aims to test various knowledge cultures and practices in terms of their difference along these variable continuums of organizational types.

## THE CRITICAL TRADITION IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

The critical tradition of the sociology of knowledge began most famously with Karl Marx in the mid-1800s. Marx’s emphasis on class relations led him to argue for the materialist root of cultural ideas, directly opposing German idealism. Marx viewed ideas that make up the ideological “superstructure” as products of the “infrastructure” of material and productive relations. Marx (1978) argues that it is real people who, through their interrelations and subsistence within the bounds of nature, develop ideas:

Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces . . . In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven . . . Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life. (Pp. 154–155)

Thus, for Marx, knowledge is the result of human activity rooted within material conditions. Marx further argues that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force” (p. 172). Laws are enacted to bolster or protect capitalist production and are justified by the fact that they are decided in relation to abstract, disinterested ideals. Marx viewed science as a natural offshoot of the productive processes of society, and thus the Marxist perspective would come to represent scientists as proletariat workers producing knowledge and technology to help bolster production and profits for the ruling classes (see Mulkay 1979; Aronowitz 1988; Stachel 1995). Despite Marx’s belief in the fact that science is socially directed by the interests of development and production in society, he believed in the power of the scientific method to produce neutral, value-free understandings of the natural world (Rose and Rose 1976). The content of scientific knowledge was protected from its social roots for Marx vis-à-vis the rigor and discipline of the scientific method.

Marx’s insights successfully laid the groundwork for Mannheim’s (1936) pioneering of the sociology of knowledge as a formal tradition. Mannheim was primarily concerned with the development of ideology and knowledge through the course of history, arguing that a great deal of our knowledge can be accounted for outside of purely rational thought springing forth from empirical conditions:

The process of knowing does not actually develop historically in accordance with immanent laws . . . it does not follow from the nature of things or from pure logical possibilities . . . it is not driven by an inner dialectic. On the contrary, the emergence and the crystallization of actual thought is influenced in many divisive ways by extra-theoretical factors of the most diverse sort. (P. 240)

By identifying forms of knowledge created through history that do not follow as a logical extension from the available evidence, Mannheim showed there is room for “extratheoretical” (i.e., social) elements to come into play in the explanation of historically situated knowledge claims. Thus, for example, the specific interests of the dominant classes in power will often be found to govern (albeit subconsciously) much of the “objective” content of, for instance, political, religious, and legal tenets presented in ideology. Utopias are challenges to prevailing orthodox ideologies, offering ways to change the current order of knowledge, enabling an alternative way of life for society. All knowledge, for Mannheim, was relational, and as such, historical analysis was the best hope for uncovering the hidden motives of ideological systems (see Ketler, Meja, and Stehr 1984).

Neo-Marxist approaches to science have been linked to this question of ideology. Theorists in the Frankfurt School argued that by treating ideology as “just another form of knowledge” that is historically relative, Mannheim missed

the point that ideology was inextricably connected to a sense of false consciousness among the masses, and represented a concrete historical reality that is linked with the material production in society (see Wiggershaus 1994; Bailey 1996). Combining Marx with Weber’s account of modern rationalization, the Frankfurt School linked a deadly dialectic of Enlightenment to science and a resulting instrumental reason (later defended by Habermas 1987), which led to threats of authoritarianism and the destruction of nature. C. W. Mills’s (1959) similar concern with mass society and the ideology and symbolism prevalent in American politics alongside Alvin Gouldner’s (1979) pioneering approach to intellectuals can be seen as American variants of this critical theory.

Unlike the position Marx himself took on scientific knowledge, neo-Marxists tend to critique what they see as the procapitalist features in the actual content of knowledge claims in science. Marxist theories treat scientific knowledge as a determinate product of material and social conditions (Restivo 1995). For example, Alfred Sohn-Rethal (1978) attempted to show that mathematics arose as a way to further commodity exchange and that because of this, all of math and science is at its root based on economic ideologies. Aronowitz (1988) argues that science represents a hegemonic system, in that it is considered a dominant form of ideology that serves the interests of the powerful in society, akin to the use of religious ideology as a force of coercion in the past. He is critical of “internalist” sociological and philosophical investigations into science that do not consider the effects of external social and ideological influences on the products and practices of science. While not directly tied to Marxism, “interests theory” was first articulated in Edinburgh’s “strong programme,” pioneered most prominently in the work of Barry Barnes (1977, 1982). For Barnes, the types of interests that affect knowledge include broader considerations than a purely Marxist economic-oriented perspective and allows for such things as gender, race, and politics (see also Hess 1997).

The postmodernist turn in France, often linked with the political upheaval of the 1960s (see Seidman 1994), created a drastic turn in the sociology of knowledge. Derrida (1976, 1978) turned against the structuralism of Saussure and Lévi-Strauss and argued that while language is indeed built on binary oppositions, the nature of these oppositions are culturally relative. Furthermore, the valuations that are linked to these oppositions serve as a tool of discursive power that establishes the conditioning of everyday reality and hence is a powerful and ever-present form of control. By staking a strategy of “deconstruction,” Derrida launched an attack on language, to uncover the logical and meaningful contradictions in discursive representations, as a way to challenge, subvert, and decenter the legitimacy of authority, in whatever form it may take. Lyotard (1984) shared Derrida’s interest in language and treated social life, and all of its institutions, as a system of Wittgensteinian “language games,” all with their internally consistent agreed on rules. Lyotard urged us to leave the



quest for modernist universal knowledge claims behind, as these “metanarratives” produced by the sciences and humanities are deeply linked to the exclusion and oppression of those left out. As such, grand narratives ought to be abandoned for local narratives, where incommensurability and difference is celebrated. Baudrillard (1983) moves the classic Marxist concerns of class and the ownership of the means of production as secondary to the most powerful coercive force in postmodern society, which is, like Derrida envisioned, the realm of the symbolic. Symbols begin to take on a power of their own, as the flood of symbols has become so replete that their connections to concrete referents is lost. The differentiation between the signifier and the sign has collapsed. Baudrillard’s (2005) later examples of the media attention to the Gulf War, 9/11, and the controversy surrounding the Abu Ghraib prison as the ultimate “reality TV” underlines the public’s growing dependence on media imagery.<sup>3</sup>

Foucault’s (1980) emphasis on power resonates with the concerns of Derrida and Baudrillard in that he believes that power is to be found in the “discursive formations” that condition our thoughts and become ingrained in our very being. Foucault’s focus for analysis is discourse, to uncover the microsites of power as they are active across institutions and everyday life. Foucault’s (1969) *Archaeology of Knowledge* uses his method of “genealogy” to uncover the discontinuities in the progress of knowledge, in an effort to uncover the interests and power mechanisms at work in its history. He argues that the discursive formations that are generated in the creation of intellectual ideas often find their way into politics and everyday life as well (for the case of Freudianism, see McLaughlin 1998a). In this way, knowledge is tied closely to forms of microcontrol, serving to label and control people who must exercise internal monitoring and self-discipline. Foucault also posited that beneath the possibility of science lies a particular episteme, an epistemological substructure that allows for different types of knowledge to take hold. Thus, the episteme characterizing the classical age (an emphasis on resemblances) varied markedly from the episteme that allowed for the rise of science in the seventeenth century (an emphasis on causal reasoning). Foucault’s work remains controversial, contested, and difficult yet is highly imaginative and reminds us of the connections between the discursive formations of knowledge and their relation to power (for a critique, see Hamilton 1996). Curtis (2001) and Woolf (1989) have used Foucault’s approach in their historically grounded critiques of the use of statistics by the state to categorize and control sectors of the population. Edward Said (2003) built on Foucault to outline his influential critique of orientalism, a postcolonial account of how the power of European imperial domination was inscribed in representations of the “other.”

According to Brown (1998), postmodernism’s criticism of science consists of the following elements. First, all claims and ideas are reduced to text, and science is nothing more than individuals rhetorically persuading others that

their textual claims are of more value than others (see Bazerman 1988; Gross 1990). Second, all epistemological assumptions of the modern period are questioned such that there remains little or no confidence in the ability to base an argument solely on evidence (see also Ward 1996). Third, there is a shift of focus from how scientists represent, discover, or interpret reality, to how scientists create reality. Bohm (1994:343) criticizes science for being an amoral discipline and argues instead for a science that does not attempt to separate truth and virtue (similar to the non-modernism of Latour 2004). Bohm finds the directions and motivations of science as amoral, in that it serves whatever good or evil entity that happens to be in command. Postmodernism tends to treat the views of science as true only insofar as they are consistent with the interests of the dominant groups in society (Griffin 1988). In line with the call of Lyotard, postmodernist arguments seem to argue for a decentering of science, to allow for pluralistic, localized, and incommensurate approaches to understanding.

Feminists are another variant of the critical tradition, analyzing science as it is seen to represent an andocentric, or male-centered, enterprise. Dorothy Smith (1990) has argued that women have been conspicuously absent in formalized and mainstream knowledge and that the entire enterprise of the sciences and humanities is excessively centered on male experience. Sandra Harding’s (1986) work demonstrates unequal status to power positions in science between men and women, alleges the use of science to further sexist and racist agendas and argues that male bias exists in the meanings within science, which affects epistemological orientations and objectivity. Harding endeavors to dismantle the entire method of science from its origins and put in its place a feminist standpoint epistemology as the “successor science” (see also Smith 1987). Keller (1985) explains that the success of science has devalued women through society, as they represent the opposite traits of neutral objectivity and active interrogation celebrated through the age of reason. Feminist studies in science have concentrated especially on the fields of biology, physiology, evolution, and the social sciences, as these are most closely related to gender differences (e.g., Tuana 1989). Haraway’s (1989) study of primatology is an excellent example of uncovering the sexist biases prevalent in the field of biology. Feminist contributions to a critical sociology of knowledge have illustrated how androcentric practices, institutions, methods, and even theories can be shaped by the (often unconscious) influence of gender bias. From Marx to Mannheim, to postmodernism, postcolonialism, and contemporary feminism, the critical perspective on ideas, science, and culture has left us with a truly “contested” view of knowledge (Seidman 1994).

## EMPHASIZING THE LOCAL

Camic and Gross (2002a) argue that the new sociology of ideas can be defined in large part by a renewal in a local

emphasis. Moving away from considerations of broad-based ideological systems and purely external interests, researchers began to give precedence to the intersections of social process and local context as it relates to knowledge production. Moving away from the emphasis on critical approaches to knowledge that decries internalist approaches (Harding 1986; Aronowitz 1988), scholars began to reject and move beyond the externalist/internalist distinction. Shapin (1992) argued that the local could be used as a site to study the effects of both traditionally characterized “internal” and “external” sources of knowledge production. In light of this push to study the more local and immediate in studies of scientific and intellectual production, we will consider a range of microsociological approaches that have studied the humanities, the sciences, and the everyday.

The microsociological study of knowledge came out of Germany from the phenomenological work of Alfred Schutz (1967). His interest in the “typifications” within everyday “stocks of knowledge,” led Berger and Luckmann (1966) to take on the sociology of knowledge directly and popularize Schutz’s ideas to the American sociological landscape. This landscape was indeed ripe for such a message for how social institutions are created from the ground up, and then maintained and reshaped in ways to manage a consistent “symbolic universe.” This push to study localized knowledge as it is enacted in everyday life was largely a result of the microsociological revolution that was occurring thanks to the parallel work of Herbert Blumer (1969) and the Chicago School’s emphasis on the up-close study of urban life. Furthermore, the predecessor of symbolic interactionism, George Herbert Mead (1934) was heavily influenced by German philosophy as well, and was interested in the intersubjective and social psychological root of knowledge as it unfolds in experience. This lifelong concern of Mead and the interactionists was concordant with parallel concerns in phenomenology as to how meanings are created and transmitted vis-à-vis the “lifeworlds” of everyday people (Schutz 1967). The issue of how people attempt to fit abnormal or anomalous situations indexically into broader contexts of knowledge is also seen in the related approach of Garfinkel’s (1967) “ethnomethodology,” which explores the everyday methods and practices by which people use so-called common-sense knowledge explicitly. This emphasis on the local construction and transmission of knowledge continues to inspire a number of interactionist accounts, many of which were part and parcel of the broader ethnographic research tradition (e.g., Becker, Hughes, and Geer 1968; Prus 1996; Miall and Miall 2003; Fine 2004).

Mead (1938) was often concerned with the problem of formal (scientific) versus informal (everyday) knowledge. Indeed, the contrast between formalized, linguistically based categories of thought and lived, embodied, corporeal existence, or simply “being in the world,” has been a concern of phenomenological philosophers such as Heidegger (1977) and Merleau-Ponty (1962). Gardiner

(2000), drawing on the likes of Agnes Heller (1984), Henri Lefebvre (1991), and Michel de Certeau (1984), argues that everyday knowledge has been systematically denigrated or ignored in modern philosophy and social science, as it is seen as an inferior brand of knowledge to that of linguistic, rational, and technical knowledge. Nonetheless, sociologists have begun to build on the concerns of these thinkers and study the embodied and lived aspects of knowledge (see Crossley 1996, 2001). Indeed, a concern with the social body and its relevance for informal (but not ineffectual) meanings and knowledge in everyday life has been a concern not only in the sociological literature of consciousness but also in the construction of everyday knowledge (e.g., Scott and Morgan 1993). Bourdieu’s (1990) concept of *habitus* similarly takes knowledge to a deeper level of unconsciously developed, embodied habits that are learned through the (historically malleable) structures of community life and used, often unknowingly, as a strategy of status attainment in fields of practice.

The most famous studies of knowledge that emphasize the local are the constructionist (and postconstructionist) science studies. These schools of thought were inspired largely by Kuhn’s (1962) watershed contribution *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn’s historical analysis showed that science does not progress steadily and cumulatively over time but rather represents a series of radical breaks or paradigm shifts, which give way to new and incommensurate foundations from which to build experimental research. Beyond this, Kuhn demonstrated the highly psychological and theory-laden aspects of scientific inquiry, arguing that scientists’ socialization within a particular scientific community has highly determinative implications for the assumptions made, the questions asked, and the methods that guide research. This new wave of philosophy of science (see also Feyerabend 1975; Lakatos 1981) inspired the rise of Edinburgh’s “strong programme” in the 1970s (see Barnes 1982; Bloor 1991), which argued that all knowledge (scientific or otherwise) can and should be studied in social-psychological terms. This is a break from Mannheim and the classical sociologists, in that the content of scientific knowledge was no longer considered immune from social forces and, hence, became an object of sociological inquiry. Bloor (1991) argued for the need of “methodological symmetry” when studying science, in that so-called true and false beliefs are to be treated in the same way and accounted for by the same (generally sociological) causal factors.

While historical case studies were used to enrich and provide the foundation for the arguments of philosophers such as Kuhn (1962), Feyerabend (1975), and Lakatos (1981), contemporary field studies seem to serve much the same purpose for ethnographers of science (Knorr-Cetina 1995). In certain respects, these studies maintain a distinct advantage over historical accounts. By watching science “as it happens” within a laboratory setting, social researchers are able to see how the knowledge claims and opinions of scientists are reshaped and changed over time

in ways scientists themselves may not wish to admit in retrospective accounts. Laboratory field studies also allow researchers access to some of the pragmatic, mundane practices as well as the errors of scientific activity (e.g., Collins 1985). Instead of getting the glossed over and romanticized versions of science often given in strict accounts, or worse, that which has already been published with a “reconstructed logic,” researchers conducting in-depth field studies are able to capture the “dirty work” of science that normally could not be accessed (see Mulkay 1979).

Using this approach to research, Latour and Woolgar (1979) argued that much of science consists of “black-boxing” various tentative scientific statements into more absolute and unquestioned “facts,” not through evidence but rather communication and use, through their dissemination, transmission, and taken-for-granted application across scientific networks. Knorr-Cetina (1981) stresses the “artificiality of labs,” in that scientists are not dealing with pure nature but rather unnatural purified versions, representations, isolations, and so on. In this sense, the manipulations and interventions of scientists do not allow for “pure observation” but represent a set of constructed “artifacts.” Knorr-Cetina also demonstrates the “indexicality” of scientific research, as procedures and decisions are situationally contingent, such that laboratory practice is “decision impregnated.” Star (1989) makes similar arguments in her study of British brain research and argues that laboratories act in efforts to transform “local uncertainties” into “global certainties.” Collins and Pinch (1998) have shown that scientific activity is anything but neutral and unimpassioned and often involves a great deal of political pressure, the recruitment of allies, and the slandering of opposing camps in the “experimental regress.” Furthermore, much scientific work is based on tacit knowledge (Collins 1985), which is not carried at the level of reflective thought or scientific schematization.

While this local emphasis on the study of scientific activity was successful in breaking positivist myths about how science operates on the ground, it was not without its critics (see Sismondo 1996; Kukla 2000). If scientific knowledge is built on local constructions arising from the actions of scientists as social agents, the epistemological status of this knowledge becomes highly relativist (see Hacking 1999). Furthermore, if what the constructionists say about knowledge is true, this truism reflects back onto not only science but also these local social studies of science themselves. Reflexivity guarantees that if science is left to question, so are the various claims posited by those who study it (see Collins and Yearley 1992). Anticipating these difficulties, many in the constructionist camp began to look for a more solid attachment to materialist sources of knowledge, so as to avoid a total solipsistic relativism in their conclusions.

As such, Latour (1987) has introduced the notion of material “actants,” nonhuman actors that participate in the co-construction of reality, and act as allies or enemies of scientists struggling for success (see also Shapin and

Schaffer 1985). Pickering (1992, 1995) similarly argued for the inclusion of material actors in laboratory studies, arguing that the uncertainty of experimental work often places scientists in a passive role, forcing them to reactively construct post hoc arguments. Later work started to break this divide as Latour (1993, 2004) rejected the dualism of human and nonhuman altogether, and developed a new system of thought that studies “hybrids” at work in the “collectives” or “nature cultures” of scientific activity (see also Haraway 1991). This work has inspired Knorr-Cetina (1999) to consider technology as active agents that take on anthropomorphic personalities as part of the research team. Pinch and Bijker (1984) discussed the similarities of social studies of science and technology, leading most after Latour (1993) to simply refer to either scientific or technological activity as “technoscience.”

Certainly, scientific activity is not the only area of study where immediacy, context, and locality are emphasized. Camic (1992) wrote a provocative article that argued for a “reputational” rather than “content fit” explanation of why Talcott Parsons chose the intellectual predecessors he did. Camic argued that Parsons had easy access to the American economic institutionalists, who were actually a closer fit to the content of the ideas Parsons was trying to present. However, because these institutionalists were out of favor at Harvard, Parsons was forced to find support for his ideas across the Atlantic from figures such as Weber and Durkheim. As such, Weber and Durkheim later became lifted into hallmark figures of sociology, and the American institutionalists became largely forgotten. This “contextual” approach to studying immediate social and reputational factors affecting decisions of knowledge production by intellectuals has produced fruitful results. Maines, Bridger, and Ulmer (1996) used a similar scheme in their analysis of the construction of “mythic facts” with regard to the rather unfair treatment of Robert Park in textbook accounts of ecological theory. Lamont (1987) used a contextual approach to understand Jacques Derrida’s rise to intellectual ascendancy and popularity in France and the United States. McLaughlin (1998a, 1998b) has made use of this type of contextual reputational analysis in his explanation for the fall of neo-Freudianism and the “forgotten” status of Erich Fromm in the citation patterns of modern-day sociologists. Gross (2002) has used this style of analysis to ask what personal experiences lead some academics to gravitate toward pragmatism as an intellectual career choice. Guetzkow, Lamont, and Mallard (2004) have recently considered the local social processes by which peer-review panels judge originality in their assessments of grant applications in the humanities and the social sciences. In all of these cases, researchers focus on the local, detailed, and immediate factors affecting knowledge production and, in some cases, the writing of intellectual history (Maines et al. 1996). They share with the constructionist scholars of science, and with theorists of everyday knowledge, an eye for the specific and a

distrust for a reduction to broad, deterministic, external social forces.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The field of the sociology of knowledge has a long history and is well established in the discipline of sociology, but there are three new areas of intellectual growth we believe hold exciting promise. First, we show that knowledge studies are taking a turn from the descriptive and analytic to the applied and normative. Second, the increasing global status of the modern world presents new challenges and exciting opportunities for research. Finally, there is a new effort to study knowledge production as set of social movements, which invites a number of fascinating empirical questions. All of these recent currents suggest that the sociology of knowledge has an exciting and promising future for the twenty-first century.

### A Normative Turn

Camic and Gross (2002a) claim that with the “new sociology of ideas” researchers have increasingly turned to study knowledge production as an end in itself. Rather than adopting a normative tone, local and contextually focused scholars merely have the goal of understanding and describing how knowledge is made. How knowledge *should* be made was always left out of the consideration or interest of the scholar, perhaps in large part due to Bloor’s (1991) insistence on symmetrical treatments of truth and falsity in the study of knowledge production. According to Camic and Gross, normative stances on how knowledge *ought* to be produced are not of interest to people such as Bourdieu (1988) and Collins (1998). Rather, modern scholars in the sociology of knowledge are interested in *how* knowledge is produced, purely as a matter of sociological interest.

This trend has begun to change in large part due to the work of two dueling leaders in science studies, Bruno Latour and Steve Fuller. Latour (2004) has argued in *Politics of Nature* that the modernist system of knowledge we hold today is inadequate and actually counterproductive to our nature-culture’s constant creation and proliferation of “hybrids,” products that cannot be adequately categorized as human, subjective, or social, nor nonhuman, natural, or objective. In this modern era, with such hybridized productions of acid rain, mad cows, ozone holes, and countless other socio-technological creations, Latour claims that the old “modern constitution” is no longer an effective tool with which to organize knowledge. Latour is not simply analyzing and critically assessing modern epistemology’s alleged failure to capture the ever emerging technoconstructs of society. Rather, he is suggesting that we replace the old modern constitution with a new one. The details of Latour’s utopian vision of a system of knowledge are not important. The point is that Latour,

this former anthropologist of science who was the exemplar of Camic and Gross’s (2002a) account of a close, local, and nonjudgmental account of knowledge production, is clearly developing a normative stand on knowledge cultures, positing ways to make science more democratic by extending it out beyond the human group and into the world of nonhumans as well. While highly abstract, Latour is using his philosophy and sociological fieldwork of science to imagine a better future for the organization of knowledge.

While Steve Fuller differs from Latour in many ways, they share a normative interest in and stance on scientific knowledge production and its governance. Fuller’s (1988) book *Social Epistemology*, in particular, was a major break from traditional science studies and argued that if we know that the social organization of science influences, in deep ways, the production and content of knowledge, then the research conducted by those in science studies need not be kept at the level of the theoretical, analytical, and descriptive. Rather, Fuller argued for the development of a field that would study the effects of social organization on the production of knowledge, in an effort to improve the actual governance of existing structures. In a later work, Fuller (2000a) questioned and criticized the “authoritarian theory of knowledge” governance, arguing that this leads to a hegemonic, top-down structure of intellectual work, stifling creativity by putting constraints on what is accepted as legitimate. Fuller argues for a flattening, democratizing, and opening out of the structure of knowledge in science, such that the public is given a stronger voice in the direction of research directives. Fuller (2000b, 2004) sees “paradigm-driven” Kuhnian-styled science as a crippling organizational assumption and builds instead on the spirit of mutual criticism inspired by Karl Popper, as well as the dissenting critical Frankfurt theorists, to envision a more effective political ground for producing good and useful knowledge that represents the wishes of a greater number of people. Other scholars have used the same guidelines in their respective analysis of “knowledge governance” more generally, involving studies of existing structures with an eye to improving them in the long term (e.g., Stehr 2004).

We can also see normatively oriented discussions of epistemology and the sociology of knowledge in Michael Burawoy’s recent *American Sociological Association* presidential address. Burawoy’s (2005) four ideal-type quadrants of mutually supportive modes of sociology (professional, public, policy, and critical) is a clear attempt to use social theories of knowledge as a way to improve the production and enhance the long-reaching effectiveness of the sociological discipline. He asks not “How is sociology currently organized?” but rather “How can we organize sociology effectively in ways to develop the best knowledge, and maximize its positive effect on the outside world?” Burawoy’s intervention has given rise to an extensive debate in sociology internationally, where the normative questions of “knowledge for whom” and “knowledge for what” are being addressed centrally in the analysis

(e.g., Burawoy 2004; Vaughn 2004; Beck 2005; Etzioni 2005).

Of course, the sociological consideration of the role of the public intellectual is not entirely new (see Jacoby 1987). Lewis Coser's work offers a broad framework for understanding the role of the intellectual in society (Coser 1965, 1984; Coser, Kadushin, and Powell 1985). Charles Kadushin (1974) argued that elite intellectual life in the United States is shaped largely by the informal networks and "social circles" that operate around public intellectual magazines and journals (such as *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *Commentary*, *Dissent*) as well as the networks around *The New York Times* and *The New York Review of Books*. However, this perspective gives inadequate weight to academic and nonacademic book authors, the influence of contemporary "think tanks," the different role played by the state in distinct societies, the importance of local and regional public intellectuals, and the rise of a media-saturated culture (Brint 1994; Royce 1996; Stone 1996). Brint (1994) has moved the literature forward by framing the study of public intellectuals in the larger context of the literature on the professions and by undertaking a content analysis of the rhetoric of public intellectuals. While more comparative work is needed (see Kurzman and Owens 2002), there is an ongoing debate surrounding the ramifications of public intellectuals for knowledge, as well as for the academies they represent (Whitley 1984; Posner 2001).

## A Global View of Knowledge Production

Randall Collins's (1998) pioneering work *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* offers a challenge to the way we think about ideas, raising the question of globalization in sharp terms. In an attempt to sociologically theorize the rise and development of philosophy in Ancient Greece, China, India, Japan, and Medieval and modern Europe, Collins makes the case that the twentieth century is the first in which comprehending world history has become possible. Collins argues that the "life of the mind" is presently undergoing a fundamental change, as new information technologies, the globalization of the research university, economic linkages, and intermigration produce a common world culture. For Collins, intellectual parochialism is a serious problem today, and by the end of the twenty-first century, educated people will likely be embarrassed to know so little about the intellectual history of other parts of the world other than their own. How then might we envision a truly global sociology of knowledge?

It makes sense to start by defining what we mean by globalization. Scholte (2000) argues that while the rhetoric of globalization has often been used in imprecise ways in popular and academic debates, the concept is indispensable for scholarly analysis if we can avoid using the term simply to mean internationalization, liberalization, universalization, and Westernization. Globality suggests that the historical moment we are living through involves a new

sense of the world as a single social space, involving two central components: transplanetary relations and supraterritoriality. Transplanetary relations refer to a dramatic increase in the extent to which people are able to engage with one another in the world (Scholte 2000:14). Linked to this, Scholte's notion of supraterritoriality implies that world relations today are happening independently of geographic and territorial concerns. Whereas the older trend toward a shrinking world occurred *within* territoriality, Scholte suggests that in the new world of supraterritoriality, place is not fixed. Rather, territorial distance is covered in no time, and former boundaries no longer present any particular impediment.

Perhaps Scholte is right that social science has been excessively wedded to what he calls methodological territorialism. We can certainly see this in the study of intellectuals, where scholars have studied the American intellectual elite, the French intellectual nobility, or the Russian intelligentsia from within a framework of nation-based intellectual communities (Kadushin 1974; Brym 1980; Kauppi 1996). It is true that the flows of intellectual émigrés and "traveling theory" have always been central to the sociological analysis of intellectual (Said 1983; Coser 1984; Lamont 1987). However, perhaps the notion of globality might push the sociology of knowledge to think more carefully about ideas, information, and knowledge as it is increasingly connected in ways not constituted exclusively around national territorial boundaries (see Schofer 2003 for a promising example of this). Building on Said's (2003) critique of the Western domination of orientalism, as well as from perspectives on knowledge from outside the core of the modern world system, is going to be a central challenge for the sociology of knowledge in the coming period (see also Wallerstein 2004). Nonetheless, it is increasingly important for theorists of knowledge to "go global," in light of the changing and rapid expansion of global technology and culture into the next century.

## Intellectual Camps as Social Movements

The irony here is that new insights in the sociology of knowledge were partly stimulated by the social movements of Marxism in the nineteenth century, the New Left and feminist movements of the 1960s, and the contemporary antiglobalization movements. It makes sense that the study of social movements could now be turned back on academics themselves, as has been done in Frickel and Gross's (2005) promising new research agenda that would have us study the knowledge landscape in terms of a set of competing scientific/intellectual movements (SIMs). SIMs are defined as coherent programs of research that carry contentious practices relative to the wider academic landscape they are operating within. Frickel and Gross (2005) argue that these SIMs are inherently political groupings of collective actors, often episodic through history, and quite varying in size and scope. These movements are not assumed to be totally insular and will often garner help and

encounter obstacles from the larger (cultural, political, and corporate) environments they are working within.

What is most exciting about the theory is its potential for empirical testing as well as offering an explanatory and predictive general theory. First, they argue that SIMs will tend to emerge when powerful actors take issue with an accepted approach. Their second proposition is that SIMs will be most successful when they are able to garner the adequate resources necessary to forward their agenda (allies, money, prestige, employment, etc.). Third, there must be “micromobilization” contexts available for SIMs to succeed (through conferences, informal networks, and “invisible colleges” [Crane 1972]) for the ideas to ruminate and promote “grassroots” support. Finally, Frickel and Gross argue that successful SIMs must be “framed” (Goffman 1974; Snow and Bedford 1988) in accordance with the broader intellectual milieu of the field in which they are working (see Frickel 2004 for an illustrative case study).

Frickel and Gross’s (2005) work may prove to be a useful approach with which to formalize studies of intellectual movements, which may lead to novel findings in this area. New research might challenge the assumptions by Frickel

and Gross (2005) that successful movements are always (or mostly) begun in powerful sectors in the hierarchy of academia, leaving room to examine insights and creativity that come from the margins (Simmel 1950; Coser 1965; Farrell 2001; McLaughlin 2001). Furthermore, while Frickel and Gross define their social movements in terms that situate the actors in social environments that span beyond the university, their theory is biased toward a university-focused milieu. Research into intellectual movements that start outside the university (e.g., the women’s movement and anticolonial movements) may help to broaden the research agenda to consider these as they are generated outside of academic organizations and networks. Finally, the agenda they have laid out is limited by its implicitly nationalist focus. This raises questions about implications of the global turn in the sociology of knowledge, as ideas travel across borders, disciplines, and political spheres. The answers to these broad questions are open empirical issues, of course, but the possibilities of historical, cross-cultural, and comparative case studies on intellectual social movements suggests there is an exciting road ahead for the sociology of knowledge in the twenty-first century.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF MUSIC

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The sociology of music has enjoyed a notable boom during the final decade of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first century. This is partly evident in the rising number of publications that address music in some capacity, be it the creation, dissemination, or reception of various musical genres. From 1970 to 1980, *Sociological Abstracts* lists only 269 of such articles as appearing in journals; however, the number dealing with music climbed dramatically from the mid-1980s onward—with subsequent years yielding 265 (1985 to 1989), 340 (1990 to 1994), 507 (1995 to 1999), and 695 (2000 to 2004) publications, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, in the 1990s and 2000s, journals such as the *American Sociological Review* and publishers such as the University of Chicago Press featured works that draw on and extend the sociology of music, while journals such as *Poetics* and *Social Studies of Science* offered special issues that focus directly on music sociology.<sup>2</sup>

The present vitality of music sociology stands in stark contrast to the near dormancy of its past. As was once the case for the sociology of culture (Wuthnow 1987), the sociology of music was long marked by scattered works that failed to generate sustained scholarly interest. Cruz (2002) traces the roots of music sociology back to the autobiography of Frederick Douglas ([1845] 1999), wherein discussions of slave music (i.e., spirituals) demonstrated “paths to the study of music as fathomable inner culture, and as a window to a social world of subjects hitherto misunderstood” (Cruz 2002:16). While this autobiography sparked interest in spirituals (see also Cruz 1999), its substantive potential, such as the role of music in identity

construction, would not be realized for some time in sociology (see DeNora 2000). Another early milestone occurred with Georg Simmel’s ([1882] 1968) provocative work on the origins of music, which treated music as originally emanating from emotionally charged speech. However, his effort did little to move the sociology of music along (Etzkorn 1973).

Music sociology languished during the early to mid-1900s. Max Weber’s ([1921] 1958) work on the historical uniqueness of Western music seemed to create little reaction among sociologists of the day; even in the present, his scholarship on music remains far less known in comparison with his work on religion and bureaucracy.<sup>3</sup> Several sociologists offered ethnographies of Chicago music venues, as well as ethnographies that heeded music when detailing social life in Chicago (e.g., Cressey 1932); however, such efforts would subside for a period of time (Grazian 2004a). Theodor Adorno (e.g., 1941b, [1938] 1988, [1962] 1989) penned numerous works across the decades that addressed things such as the deleterious effects of commercial music. While his work arguably attracted more contemporary interest than did Weber’s, its complex and contentious nature likely limited his influence (see Morrison 1978; Witkin 2000; DeNora 2003). Paul Lazarsfeld and colleagues (e.g., Lazarsfeld and Stanton 1941, 1949; Lazarsfeld and the Bureau of Applied Social Research 1946) detailed the workings of commercial music industries and documented the patterns and preferences found among music audiences. By the mid-1950s, such efforts had become uncommon in sociology (Peterson 1976).

AUTHOR’S NOTE: I thank Dennis Peck for his patience and support. My completion of this chapter greatly benefited from his efforts.

The fate of music sociology changed as scattered works gave way to various schools of thought. As was the case for the sociology of culture (Griswold 1992), this was driven by the interrogation of key issues. In the 1970s, two schools focused intently on the collective nature of music; the production of culture perspective applied insights gained from organizational sociology to the study of music, while the art world perspective approached music by drawing on symbolic interactionism (Gilmore 1990; Peterson and Anand 2004). Other schools of thought soon joined the sociology of music, with contributors to each often drawing on theories at the heart of sociology. Thus, sociologists examined music in relation to such issues as subcultures (e.g., Hebdige 1979), the reproduction of inequality (e.g., Bourdieu 1984), globalization (e.g., Hesmondhalgh 2000), identity formation (e.g., Negus and Román Velázquez 2002), and social movements (e.g., Roscigno and Danaher 2004). By the turn of the twenty-first century, music sociology was marked by an expanding range of perspectives that engaged many scholars—which is arguably the best evidence of its vitality.

Given the current renewal in interest, there have been recent efforts to review (a) core issues that enliven the sociology of music, (b) particular approaches that inform this area, and (c) specific methodologies that benefit it (e.g., Martin 1995; Hennion 2003; Bennett 2004; DeNora 2004; Dowd 2004b; Grazian 2004a; Peterson and Bennett 2004; Peterson 2005). In the following sections, I offer an overview that attends to the three domains of production, content, and consumption. These domains represent analytical distinctions that may blur in both sociological scholarship and contemporary experience. Nevertheless, distinguishing among these domains provides a convenient way to organize the vast works known as music sociology. To employ a musical metaphor, this chapter surveys substantive themes and variations that occur when sociologists turn to music.

The study of music is an enterprise that involves multiple disciplines and, to a certain degree, this review will not focus solely on sociological contributions. Scholars in the humanities, for instance, have devoted much attention to music—especially those in disciplines that directly address music, such as ethnomusicology. Given this breadth of scholarship, it is not surprising that some overlap in substantive concerns has occurred between sociologists and nonsociologists (e.g., Becker 1989).

## THE PRODUCTION OF MUSIC

While many disciplines have much to say about music, sociology's forte is its ability to elucidate the context in which music is located. Early sociological efforts hint at, if not demonstrate, this. Schutz (1951) pointed to the shared knowledge and interactional cues that are necessary for the collective performance of music, contextually grounding the production (and reception) of music. Mueller (1951)

and Nash (1957, 1970) acknowledged the challenges that orchestral composers face—including their dependence on numerous actors for possible performances and the tendencies for such actors (e.g., conductors) to favor the works of past composers. MacDougal (1941) and Peatman (1942) described the efforts of the music industry to routinize the production of hit songs, with Adorno (e.g., 1941a) lamenting the effect of such efforts.

The elucidation of music's context gained momentum in the 1970s, as key sociologists forged two perspectives. The art world's perspective coalesced around the work of Howard Becker. His initial forays highlighted the constraints that many musicians face (Becker 1951, 1953)—including unstable careers, low prestige, and audiences that are indifferent to aesthetic concerns. Becker (1974) later conceptualized constraints to creativity as stemming, in general, from the collective nature of artistic production and the conventions that inform such collective efforts, thus foreshadowing his seminal statement *Art Worlds* (Becker 1982). The production of culture perspective benefited from the efforts of Paul Hirsch and, especially, Richard Peterson. In contrast to those who emphasized the power of the popular music industry, Hirsch (1969, 1972, 1973, 1975) detailed how its evolution is shaped by evolving technology and copyright law, and he emphasized the uncertainty that is inherent in industries that truck in aesthetic goods. Peterson (e.g., 1972, Peterson and Berger 1971; Peterson and DiMaggio 1975) focused on comparable issues in his wide-ranging analyses of commercial music. He also issued an important rallying cry for the new perspective, noting that it

chooses the alternative track of turning attention away from the global corpus of habitual culture and focusing instead on the processes by which elements of culture are fabricated in those milieux where symbol-system production is most self-consciously the center of activity. (Peterson 1976:672)

From the 1970s onward, these and other perspectives spurred sustained research on musical production that ranged from individual musicians to entire industries (Gilmore 1990; DiMaggio 2000; Dowd 2004b).

## MUSICIANS: SOCIALIZATION AND CAREERS

The production of music ultimately depends on individuals who enact conventions and populate various collectivities. One common theme thus concerns the socialization of musicians. Various scholars show that potential musicians must master various skills and knowledge, undermining the myth that music making is simply an intuitive activity. Drawing on such microlevel theories as phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, they detail how this ongoing process unfolds. David Sudnow's (1978) work is exemplary in this regard, as he describes in great detail the



cognitive and corporal elements that he had to absorb to become adept at jazz improvisation. In terms of the cognitive, he acquired a vocabulary that included the chords that ground music and particular scales associated with these chords. In terms of the corporal, he mastered placement of his hands on the keyboard as well as bodily motions involved in the rendering of a performance. His individual odyssey into improvisation complements the ethnomusical scholarship of Berliner (1994), who offers an exhaustive (and perhaps definitive) investigation of how jazz musicians learn to improvise.

Sociologists have followed in Sudnow's steps by also addressing the mastery and internalization of musical conventions. Some heed the corporal aspect of this process. Winther (2005) details trial-and-error methods involved in learning how to strike *taiko* drums (Japanese drums of various sizes) so as to produce a satisfactory sound and how to sense the unity of ensemble drumming via bodily motions. Curran (1996) highlights how drummers show their affiliation to a particular genre (e.g., jazz, rock) in terms of dress and the manner in which they strike their instruments. Others observe the cognitive aspects of this socialization process. For instance, they describe how rock musicians come to acquire requisite knowledge—such as appreciation for the appropriate notes to play, familiarity with technologies for producing and reproducing sound, and recognition of the etiquette needed for maintaining a band (e.g., Bennett 1980; Curran 1996; Bayton 1998; Clawson 1999a).

Another common theme concerns the careers of musicians. Although musical performance is an avocation for many (Finnegan 1989), those seeking a livelihood confront considerable challenges as historian James Kraft (1996) has shown. Contributors to the art worlds and production of culture perspectives have documented the extent to which resources such as employment and income accrue to a few individuals (Faulkner 1971, 1973; Peterson and Ryan 1983; Peterson and White 1989), as have contributors to other perspectives (see Abbott and Hrycak 1990; Strobl and Tucker 2000; Uzzi and Spiro 2005). In Germany of the eighteenth century, for example, musicians found employment in two domains—courts and towns. The former offered the potential for high salaries and prestige, yet employment could quickly end given the vagaries of the patron's financial situation; the latter (e.g., church organist) offered much stability (such as lifetime appointment) but little income, often requiring that town musicians hold multiple jobs. Tracking the careers of 595 musicians who were active between 1650 and 1810, Abbott and Hrycak (1990) find a divide between the two domains, where few musicians traversed between volatile court employment and low-income town employment and where career ladders were limited to the courts (see also Salmen 1983; Scherer 2001).

Such divergent careers are not consigned to the distant past. Regarding opportunities, consider all the composers who created Hollywood soundtracks from 1964 to 1978

(Faulkner 1973). Less than 10 percent of these composers accounted for nearly half of all soundtracks. Given that the elite tier of composers had extensive ties with various filmmakers, it was difficult for composers to cross this divide between them and the elite. Furthermore, those composers trying to “break in” were easily hampered by their choices (e.g., becoming typecast for a particular genre) at various career stages, resulting in shortened career ladders. Regarding income, economists (e.g., Felton 1978; Wassall, Alper, and Davison 1983) and sociologists (e.g., Jeffri 2003, 2004) still find that professional musicians must often hold multiple jobs to earn a living.

Some attend to broader cultural assumptions that limit career opportunities for certain types, such as female musicians. In Vienna of the late 1700s and early 1800s, the piano became increasingly gendered as the music of Beethoven was cast as embodying both the “masculine” and “genius.” Whereas female pianists once performed in public as frequently as their male counterparts—and performed similar compositions—public performance was increasingly the domain of men because the athletic requirements of Beethoven's compositions were seen as inappropriate for women (DeNora 1995, 2002). Such constraints for women continue to the present in both the realms of classical and popular music, although some gains have occurred (e.g., Allmendinger and Hackman 1995; Coulangeon Ravet, and Roharik 2005; Dowd, Liddle, and Blyler 2005).<sup>4</sup> For instance, women have faced historical barriers to becoming rock instrumentalists because this music has long been viewed as “masculine” (Bayton 1998; Clawson 1999a, 1999b). However, there are a growing number of women bassists in alternative rock bands, wherein musicians have recast the electric bass as “feminine” because of its ability to anchor musical performance and foster group solidarity; nevertheless, the guitar and drums largely remain the purview of men (Clawson 1999b). Drawing on various theories, these studies show that nonmusical factors (e.g., assumptions about gender) have palpable effects on musical careers. Research within and beyond sociology also makes this point when showing how assumptions about race impinge on musical careers (e.g., Sanjek 1997; Southern 1997; Dowd and Blyler 2002). This research reminds us that those musicians who go on to flourish in organizations represent a fraction of the total (see Menger 1999).

## MUSIC ORGANIZATIONS: FORMALIZATION AND SENSEMAKING

Organizations play a prominent role in music production. Multinational corporations dominate the recording industry (Peterson and Bennett 2004; Leyshon et al. 2005). Nonprofit organizations are preeminent purveyors of “high culture” (e.g., symphony orchestras) (Blau 1989; DiMaggio 1992; Born 1995). An array of organizations, such as unions, broadcasters, and retailers, shape the creation and

distribution of music (du Gay and Negus 1994; Dowd 2003). Sociologists, among others, have focused on the implications of such organizations by emphasizing the themes of formalization and sensemaking.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars from various disciplines approach the first theme in a way that resonates with Weber's (1978) approach. They heed the distinction between nonformalized ways of organizing musical production (e.g., democratic) and formalized ones (e.g., bureaucratic), as well as the potential for substantive values to be replaced by a concern with the "bottom line" as formalization occurs (e.g., Seiler 2000; Ahlqvist 2001; Grazian 2004b).

In the recording industry, for instance, small recording firms ("indies") confront a marketplace that is largely defined by the multinational corporations that are highly attuned to profitability ("majors") (Lee 1995; Hesmondhalgh 1996, 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Gray 1988). The majors have formalized, among other things, contracts and royalty rates that reflect the interests of the firm rather than performers, a star system that favors a few performers and genres, and massive distribution networks by which recordings reach retailers and consumers. Indies that intentionally resist this formalization—including punk indies that take a favorable approach to performers (e.g., high royalty rates) and dance indies that eschew stars—attempt to survive in a marketplace that operates counter to their values. For those that do survive, they face pressures to formalize (e.g., contracting with majors for distribution) and run the risk of resembling the majors that they initially resisted.

Formalization is also at play in the nonprofit realm. In the wake of rising production costs, aging audiences, and declining federal funding, U.S. opera companies, symphony orchestras, and dance companies are increasingly concerned with bottom line, as the funding that is available often requires some evidence of an organization's ability to reach an audience. Thus, these nonprofits tend to rely on proven works that have drawn past audiences and on marketing efforts to draw future audiences (Baumol and Bowen 1966; DiMaggio 1984; Martorella 1985; Peterson 1986; Gilmore 1993; McNeely 1993; Glynn 2000; Pierce 2000; Heilbrun 2001).

Studies of the commercial and nonprofit realms suggest that formalization narrows the range of available musical content. Nevertheless, there are limits to its impact. On the one hand, the elaboration of the division of labor is an important aspect of formalization, whereby positions are assigned specific tasks and given rules and procedures for realizing those tasks. Given that musical production is ultimately a creative endeavor, the procedures for certain tasks are highly ambiguous and/or complex, thereby resisting routinization. Individuals in such positions, which include conductors, record producers, and sound engineers, can occasionally gain autonomy given the discretion that they enjoy. To the extent that they exploit this autonomy, they expand the range of music found at various organizations (see Arian 1971; Kealy 1979; Gilmore 1987; Hennion

1983; Murnighan and Conlon 1991; Ahlqvist and Faulkner 2002; Dowd 2000; Horning 2004; Porcello 2004). On the other hand, developments in the environment can occasionally spur highly formalized organizations to adapt new music. As shown below in the content section, the majors have formalized a method for keeping apprised of new musical developments. Research on another theme, sensemaking, gives an initial purchase on this development.

Various theories—such as sensemaking and neoinstitutionalism (Scott 1995; Weick 1995)—posit that organizations confront an environment that requires deciphering. Rather than relying on all possible information, which would be a daunting endeavor, organizations use a limited range of information to interpret their environment. Social scientists have applied these theoretical insights to music organizations, as shown by Negus's (1999) work on the majors. These corporations are well positioned in the recording business, but even they face uncertainty. While their information gathering on consumer demand has grown more sophisticated, it still remains limited, if not inaccurate, and many of their products can remain unprofitable. The majors cope by formalizing certain structures and strategies. They simplify the vast array of music found beyond their boundaries by creating divisions within the firms that are oriented to a few genres. They then employ a portfolio management strategy—monitoring the performance of each division and allocating resources to divisions deemed successful. Their evaluations, however, are shaped by assumptions, as the case of rap music illustrates. Ill at ease with aspects of rap (e.g., its controversial lyrics) and skeptical about its long-term economic viability (e.g., its international appeal<sup>6</sup>), the majors relegate this genre to black music divisions within the firm and to contractual alliances with rap producers beyond the firm. As a result, the majors have invested relatively little in rap and have cordoned it off from other genres. Sensemaking is thus inscribed into their daily operations, shaping the type of music that the majors offer and underlying any formalization.

While the sensemaking process helps organizations manage the uncertainties inherent in the creation and dissemination of music (see Ahlqvist and Faulkner 2002; Hennion 1983; du Gay and Negus 1994; Anand and Peterson 2000; Maitlis 2005), it can also contribute to instability when competing interpretations collide. These collisions can occur within an organization, as Glynn (2000, 2002) reveals. Musicians at the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) interpreted their organization's mission in terms of musical excellence, while the administrators and trustees did so in terms of the bottom line. The latter interpretation was dominant for years before the musicians eventually responded via a disruptive and contentious strike. In the wake of the strike's resolution, ASO performances combined both an emphasis on marketing that appealed to administrators (e.g., "An Evening of Mozart") and an emphasis on innovative interpretations of established works that appealed to the musicians. Such

collisions can also occur between organizations. The major recording firms of the past doubted the popularity of jazz, blues, country, and rock 'n' roll. They had to alter their assumptions—and address these genres—when indies mined substantial demand for each (Peterson 1990, 1997; Ennis 1992; Dowd 2003; Phillips and Owens 2004). Besides creating opportunities for musical change, then, these collisions also direct our attention to organizational fields, wherein competing interpretations are located.

## MUSIC FIELDS: GENRES AND DISTRIBUTION

Music organizations do not operate in isolation but, instead, are situated in “organizational fields” that contain the totality of relevant actors and a range of resources (DiMaggio 1991). Proponents of various perspectives, thus, focus on how music fields emerge and develop (e.g., Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1993; Peterson and Anand 2004), with many documenting how an interpretation diffuses throughout a field to such a degree that it becomes “institutionalized”—becoming the lens through which most actors make sense of their field. Two common themes address how ways of classifying certain genres and of distributing music become taken for granted.

Scholars in sociology and the humanities point to the situation in which a vast array of musical material is classified into distinct genres, and they interrogate the development of such classifications. Research on classical music offers an important example, especially the institutional work of Paul DiMaggio. Despite its moniker of “classical,” this classification did not take root in Europe until the early 1800s. Prior to that time, according to historian William Weber (1984, 1992, 2001), patrons of music emphasized contemporary works by living composers rather than past works by dead composers. Notions regarding music that is both exalted and enduring would eventually diffuse to the United States, yet they initially found no widespread counterpart in the realm of performance. Commercial establishments of the day, for instance, offered programs that routinely mixed exalted music with entertainment, thereby blurring the distinction of classical music (DiMaggio 1982b, 1991; see Levine 1988; McConachie 1988; Saloman 1990). DiMaggio (1982a, 1982b, 1991, 1992) argues that “classical music” was eventually institutionalized in the United States as the following occurred. Urban elites established nonprofit symphony orchestras that they funded and oversaw, beginning in Boston and later occurring throughout the United States. These orchestras mostly offered exalted music, thus segregating classical from popular music, and developed an appreciative audience. The establishment of nonprofits and the attendant emphasis on classical music later diffused to U.S. opera and dance companies. Finally, university curricula, as well as the emergent radio and recording industries, endorsed the distinction of classical music and

lauded its superiority. By the mid-1900s, this genre classification was widely accepted; by the late 1990s, it was eroding for various reasons, including the bottom-line emphasis noted above.

The case of classical music in the United States is instructive. First, it calls attention to the general process by which genres are institutionalized. Cultural entrepreneurs develop an interpretation of how particular musical material is to be classified relative to other material, and then, these entrepreneurs and others construct arrangements and secure resources that uphold that particular classification. That is, they construct an organizational field. We see this same process occurring in the institutionalization of such genres as the *canzone d'autore*, country music, Israeli popular music, jazz, punk, rap, and rhythm and blues (e.g., Peterson 1997; Hesmondhalgh 1998b; Keyes 2002; Lopes 2002; Santoro 2002; Dowd 2003; Regev and Seroussi 2004). Second, it reveals that genre classifications are not static—as sociological work on jazz has made clear (e.g., Gray 1997; Lopes 2002; Appelrouth 2003). Finally, it reveals that the viability of a particular genre field is often shaped by its connection to other organizational fields—such as those involved in the dissemination of multiple genres (e.g., the broadcasting field).

Scholars addressing the dissemination of music confront an important historical development: Live performance and music notation are no longer the only means by which music reaches an audience (Hennion 2001). In the past century or so, various technologies have made possible fields that are devoted to music distribution—most notably, the established fields of recorded music and music broadcasting and the emergent field of online music. The rise of these technologies, however, does not solve the dilemma of *how* businesses should exploit them, as demonstrated by an institutional analysis of U.S. radio broadcasting (Leblebici et al. 1991; Leblebici 1995). Commercial radio could not thrive until an early problem was addressed—when actors in a given locale broadcast on the same frequency, they obscured the content. This was eventually solved by the federal government, which required that private firms attain a license to broadcast on a particular frequency.<sup>7</sup> Yet other problems remained—including what to broadcast, who to target, and how to finance this content. Leblebici and colleagues thus document how taken-for-granted answers to these questions changed dramatically over several decades. For instance, radio programming transitioned from live performances to prerecorded music, its target shifted from a mass audience at the national level to segmented audiences at the local level, and its financing eventually morphed from the sale of radio sets and radio parts to the sale of advertising time via short commercials. These changes were driven by once-marginal firms that sought to improve their position by introducing new ways to address these long-standing issues.

The work of Leblebici (1995; Leblebici et al. 1991) is emblematic of that by other social scientists—which, taken

together, reveals commonalities in the evolution of music distribution fields. On the one hand, the evolution of these fields does not simply flow from technological imperatives. Government policy shapes how distribution technologies can be used. Patent law limited the number of competitors in the early U.S. recording industry, and copyright law played a role in the demise of the original incarnation of Napster. These are but two examples regarding the import of law and regulation (Hirsch 1975; Frith 1987, 1993; Dowd 2003; McCourt and Burkhart 2003). Furthermore, distribution technologies have been used in drastically different fashions across time and place. For instance, Thomas Edison and others expected that early recording machines would be used for business dictation. However, other entrepreneurs carried the day with an alternative interpretation that emphasized the sale of prerecorded music; the Victor Company, in particular, rose to prominence by touting its operatic recordings (Seifert 1994, 1995). Thus, interpretations of *how* to use technologies are as important as the technologies themselves (e.g., Greve 1996; Hesmondhalgh 1996; Regev 1997b; Hargittai 2000; Ahlqvist 2001; Burkhart and McCourt 2004; Leyshon et al. 2005). On the other hand, the cited works show that the evolution of these fields proceeds in stages that alternate between stability and flux. Typically, peripheral actors in the field—who are disadvantaged by the status quo—push these stages along when they help create new institutions that favor their interests and, in the process, transform the field. Of course, these commonalities have implications for musical content, as shown in the next section.

## THE CONTENT OF MUSIC

Sociologists of music have done well at analyzing and explaining the context in which music occurs, but they have done less well in its treatment of musical content. This is partly the result of substantive concerns. Those concerned with production often focus on dynamics involved in music making rather than the resulting content; those interested in reception often focus on responses of listeners rather than the content that spurred these responses. This need not be the case because early scholarship shows the potential that sociology can bring to the study of content. Weber ([1921] 1958) examined the manner in which various societies have organized the tonal material that comprises music, and he highlighted how the Occident has done so in an increasingly systematic, rather than ad hoc, fashion—noting such Western elements as the diatonic scale and equal temperament (which are derived via arithmetic calculations and embodied in the piano keyboard), as well as the system of musical notation. Sorokin (1937) posited broad-sweeping cultural trends, whereby societies cycle between ideational and sensate cultures, and the implications that these trends hold for music and other arts (e.g., content oriented toward religious values vs. entertainment). In contrast to his sometimes sweeping

pronouncements against commercial music, Adorno ([1949] 1973) offered thorough analysis of works by Stravinsky and Schoenberg and addressed the importance (and rarity) of innovative composition.

While past works have suggested the potential of music sociology, recent schools of thought provide ways of reaching this potential. Both the art worlds and production of culture perspectives, for instance, emphasize the role of conventions in music making, and each highlights moments in which those conventions are subverted (e.g., Peterson and Berger 1975; Becker 1982). That is, each provides a framework to address both musical homogeneity and diversity. Institutional analysis has historically emphasized the collective nature of aesthetic classification—such as that involving urban elites and high culture (e.g., DiMaggio 1987). As a result, it provides leverage on how particular content is located relative to other content. From the mid-1970s onward, music sociologists have drawn on these perspectives—as well as other theoretical frameworks—to address the form that musical content takes (e.g., lyrical themes, melodic complexity) and the evaluation of this content (e.g., valorization).

## THE FORM OF MUSIC: INNOVATION AND DIVERSITY

Becker (1982) provides a convenient way to approach the vast and disparate array of musical material that currently exists. We can consider the extent to which an *individual* entity—such as a composition, composer, or genre—relies on precedence and the extent to which it is unique; thus, conventional music greatly resembles what has come before, while innovative music breaks new ground. Sociologists and others have taken this insight to heart and have examined factors that foster musical innovation, as well as the related theme of musical diversity—the dissimilarity that occurs among an *aggregate* (e.g., a group of compositions).

Sociologists often explore innovation by focusing on the contributions of particular musicians (e.g., Bjorn 1981; Cerulo 1984; Danaher 2005; Van Delinder 2005), taking a track that is common in the humanities. Such work can vary widely along a number of dimensions—including the analytical approach, the empirical case, and the quality of the effort. In contrast, one productive approach links significant musical shifts to the emergence and/or evolution of technology—drawing on such perspectives as the production of culture and the social construction of technology (e.g., Pinch and Troco 2002). This approach has precedence: Weber ([1921] 1958) noted that the construction of particular instruments—such as the aulos, which could play “in between” the standard notes of its day—helped spur the Western innovation of chromaticism (i.e., a system of 12 notes).

Like Weber, DeNora (1995, 2002) reminds us that “technology” is a broad term that is not limited to

electronic instruments (see also Theberge 1997; Bijsterveld and Schulp 2004). Beethoven advocated for a piano that could withstand the force of his playing. While his style of playing represented a departure from contemporary standards—and initially drew criticism—his increasing prominence proved key. The leading Viennese piano manufactures produced a triple-string technology that endured his demanding touch. In short, Beethoven redefined the standard of piano playing in Vienna and beyond. Comparable work (e.g., Theberge 1997; Pinch and Troco 2002; Waksman 2004) addresses how musicians seized on other instruments—such as the electric guitar and synthesizer—and, in devising uses for them, pushed music into new directions, including heavy metal (see Walser 1993) and progressive rock (see Palmer 2001). Another stream focuses on emergent digital technologies that, among other things, have led to relatively inexpensive “bedroom studios” that figure prominently in the evolution of emergent genres (e.g., Hesmondhalgh 1998a; Keyes 2002; Theberge 2004; Marontate 2005).

“Sampling” provides a compelling example of how the use of technology can break new musical ground. This technology allows one to make digital files containing snippets of sonic material (e.g., past musical recordings), which can then be inserted directly into another recording or be inserted after it is transformed into a “loop” (i.e., where all or part of the snippet plays repeatedly in a rhythmic pattern) (Hesmondhalgh 2000; Theberge 2003). Taylor (2001) argues that this sampling represents a fundamental (and innovative) shift in music making because it brings together consumption and production in new ways, as when the German group, Enigma, inserted samples of Gregorian chants and a Taiwanese folk song into their own composition. This shift in music making reached a pinnacle arguably in rap music of the 1980s, when musicians relied on a wealth of samples to create the sonic pastiche that accompanied their lyrics—such as Public Enemy’s “Bring the Noise” (Walser 1995; Keyes 2002).<sup>8</sup> However, samples that relied on past recordings increasingly required clearance from and remuneration to copyright holders, thereby raising the cost of this compositional technique (Rose 1994; Keyes 2002). Lena’s (2004) content analysis of rap hit songs, for instance, shows that rap musicians relied on fewer samples as the early 1990s gave way to the mid-1990s—thus suggesting limits to innovation.

Scholarship in the social sciences and humanities deals with the second theme, diversity, in a number of ways. A sizable body of research tracks the range of representations contained in musical content, such as the images of women in music videos (e.g., Pegley 2000; Emerson 2002); however, this research can tend more to description than explanation. Fortunately, other streams of research provide a corrective. Peterson and Berger (1972, 1975) initiated one such stream when they explain the waxing and waning of diversity in terms of “concentration” (i.e., the extent to which majors dominate the industry). Focusing on the U.S. recording industry from 1948 to 1973, they find long

periods of time in which concentration is high and various indicators of diversity (e.g., the number of performers) are at low levels and short periods where concentration is low and diversity is high. Their explanation, which draws in part on industrial organization economics, stresses the conservative nature of majors versus the innovative nature of indies that occasionally rupture the status quo.

Beginning in the 1980s, scholars find that concentration and diversity can co-occur in the U.S. recording industry as well as in some European industries (e.g., Hellman 1983; Frith 1988; Burnett 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1996; Dowd 1992; Lopes 1992). They explain this by noting how the majors have altered their approach to production (see also Christianen 1995; Lee 1995; Hesmondhalgh 1998b). Smarting from instances in which indies caught them unaware—most notably, the explosion of rock ‘n’ roll in 1955—the majors sought to emulate and exploit indies via “decentralized” production. This included the creation of indie-like divisions within the majors and numerous contractual alliances with indies, which provided the majors with an expanding range of performers and genres. As decentralized production grows more pronounced in the U.S. recording industry, concentration’s negative effect on diversity is reduced. Thus, even in times of high concentration, we see a flourishing of elements associated with musical diversity—heightened numbers of new firms, new performers, African American performers, and female performers—as well as increased melodic complexity and musical dissimilarity among hit songs (Dowd 1992, 2000, 2004a; Dowd and Blyler 2002; Dowd et al. 2005). Comparable moves to decentralization in the U.S. radio industry may also promote diversity (see Ahlqvist and Fischer 2000; Lee 2004). Still, pressures toward centralization, such as economic downturns, remain for both industries, and these pressures represent a challenge for diversity (see Lopes 2002).

Another stream—one that includes sociologists and ethnomusicologists—considers how global processes can alter the diversity of available music. In doing so, they show the complexities of concentration and technology. For instance, a handful of multinational corporations dominate the global distribution of recorded music (e.g., Laing 1986, 1992; Burnett 1996). Consequently, their interpretations regarding “viable” musical products hold much weight. In constructing very narrow notions of what constitutes such categories as “salsa” and “world music,” the majors may greatly limit the range of performers and genres from various locales that receive worldwide distribution (see Feld 1994; Frith 1989, 2000; Taylor 1997; Negus 1999).<sup>9</sup> Yet, in this global flow of recordings, there are also instances when the total range of music expands—as when local actors respond to the products of the majors by creating musical material that selectively combines elements from abroad with local traditions (e.g., Ryback 1990; Mitchell 1996, 2001; Magaldi 1999) and when they create and uphold musical alternatives to the products flowing into their borders (e.g., Grenier 1993; de Launey 1995;

Regev 1997a; Santoro 2002; Regev and Serousi 2004). Meanwhile, technology can facilitate the easy appropriation of musical material from distant lands, as when “First World” performers rely on samples of indigenous performers, and it thus limits the (potential) careers of the latter performers and the range of music they represent (Hesmondhalgh 2000; Taylor 2001; Theberge 2003). Still, the use of technology can also promote musical diversity, as when the introduction of the inexpensive cassette in India spurred a flourishing of genres that were previously little- or unrecorded (Manuel 1993).

### THE EVALUATION OF MUSIC: HIERARCHY AND VALORIZATION

Once musical content emerges, we frequently see an evaluative process in which actors situate one type of content relative to others. DiMaggio (1987) states that this evaluation occurs along several dimensions—including the extent to which various actors rank some types as superior to others and the extent to which these rankings are widely accepted by others. In describing this process, then, DiMaggio reinforces a point made by Bourdieu (1993): We should heed both the physical production of art (i.e., content) and its symbolic production (i.e., evaluation). Music sociologists have done so by considering themes of hierarchy and valorization.

While some sociologists focus on the production process that surround genre classifications, those with a penchant for content pay particular attention to hierarchies at play in these classifications—such as racialized hierarchies. In the United States of the early 1900s, for instance, certain powerful actors (e.g., recording executives) drew sharp distinctions between music created by African Americans and by European Americans, deeming the former as less worthy than the latter. As a result, they initially avoided the production of music by African Americans, they offered “sanitized” versions of genres associated with African Americans—such as recordings of “symphonic” jazz by white musicians rather than “hot” jazz by black musicians—and they disparaged the musical innovations of black musicians (e.g., advancing the art of improvisation, developing new timbres) for deviating from “good” music. When recordings of African Americans finally became common in the 1920s, this disparate content was simply classified as “race” music and segregated from other musical genres for decades (e.g., Lopes 2002; Appelrouth 2003; Dowd 2003; Phillips and Owens 2004; Roy 2004). While current evaluation of music by African Americans has changed considerably (see Gray 1997; Lopes 2002), the implications of race still remain striking, as shown in scholarship on rap music (e.g., Binder 1993; Negus 1999; Watkins 2001; Keyes 2002).<sup>10</sup>

Sociologists and others also examine hierarchy by interrogating “authenticity”—showing that this positive ranking does not simply flow from musical content but

results from a process in which competing claims are made about content (e.g., Regev 1992a; Taylor 1997; Hesmondhalgh 1999; Frith 2000; McLaughlin and McLoone 2000). Two impressive works, for instance, show how these claims can vary across time and place. In the historical development of country music, the “authentic” label has been applied, on the one hand, to performers whose dress and comportment harkens back to “old time” or rustic traditions and whose music is decidedly unpolished and, on the other hand, to performers whose persona is refined and whose music is polished if not “poplike.” Rather than proceeding in a linear fashion—such as from unpolished to polished—what is deemed “authentic” in country music has vacillated between the two designations, with well-situated actors (e.g., Henry Ford, the Grand Ole Opry, media personnel) advancing claims about each (Peterson 1997). In the contemporary setting of Chicago blues, claims of authenticity vary among actors and locales. Unschooled tourists and entrepreneurs locate “authentic” blues in glitzy clubs that feature black musicians performing a narrow range of standards (e.g., “Sweet Home Chicago”), while knowledgeable fans and musicians can locate the “authentic” in run-down clubs in which black and white musicians emphasize the performative nature of blues (e.g., “keeping it real”) instead of a rigid repertoire (Grazian 2003, 2004b). Such work makes clear that authenticity is a fabrication, to use Peterson’s term, rather than an objective evaluation.

Although hierarchical evaluations of music are fairly common, universal recognition of these evaluations remain somewhat rare. Scholars who address the theme of valorization thus heed not only the claims for why a particular music is superior but also the discourse of powerful actors that endorses such claims. Educational curriculum offers important examples of this discourse, because it upholds certain types of music as deserving of scholarly attention. While this curriculum was tilted toward classical music in years past, it increasingly addresses other music (e.g., DiMaggio 1991; Dowd et al. 2002; Lopes 2002; DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004; Bevers 2005). Professionals (most notably, other musicians) and critics have likewise played an important role in the valorization of music, with their awards and publications celebrating the music that should receive public attention. Indeed, longitudinal and cross-national scholarship suggests that the amount of critical coverage given to music has increased in recent decades and that the range of music praised by professionals and critics has increased as well, extending well beyond classical music to various popular musics (e.g., Frith 1996; Theberge 1997; Janssen 1999; Lopes 2002; Schmutz 2005). Governments and foundations have also played key roles, declaring that certain musics (e.g., classical, bluegrass) merit institutional support and subsidy (e.g., Born 1995; Peterson 1997; Dowd et al. 2002; Skinner 2006).

This broader discourse of powerful actors has endorsed, at least, two general types of claims regarding superior

music. One type of claim heeds the formal properties of music (e.g., the way in which notes are combined). For instance, the high culture aesthetic that emerged in Europe stresses musical works that stand the test of time; celebrates musical geniuses who offer works that challenge, rather than merely please, listeners; and views the works of such composers as comprising a coherent oeuvre (e.g., Weber 1992; Elias 1993; DeNora 1995; Hennion and Fauquet 2001). Thus, this claim regarding classical music exemplifies what Bourdieu (1984) labels the “pure gaze,” whereby evaluations are based on the formal aspects of this content rather than its entertainment value. As Bourdieu would expect (see Holt 1998), this pure gaze has since been transposed to avant-garde composition, jazz, and even some types of popular music—with particular musicians and the broader discourse likewise touting the formal characteristics of these musics (e.g., Regev 1992b, 1997a, 1997b; Born 1995; Cameron 1996; Gray 1997; Lopes 2002; Santoro 2002). The other type of claim heeds tradition—such as music that provides important historical roots and/or indigenous music that possesses an integrity not found in its commodified counterparts. The broader discourse has endorsed such claims for folk, jazz, popular, rap, and world musics (e.g., Taylor 1997; Lena 2004; Lopes 2002; Roy 2004; Skinner 2006). While there is variability in the extent to which various musics are valorized, one thing is clear: Classical music is not the only music that is cast as superior. Perhaps the valorization of these other musics lies behind the eroding classification of high culture that DiMaggio (1991) describes. Of course, the eclectic tastes of listeners may also lie behind this erosion (see below).

## THE RECEPTION OF MUSIC

Although scholarship on production helped invigorate the sociology of music in the 1970s and 1980s, scholarship on reception has contributed greatly to its vitality in recent times, arguably becoming the leading edge in music sociology from the 1990s onward. It is intriguing that the burgeoning of this scholarship had not occurred sooner, as early work in music sociology had already raised important substantive issues—such as how individuals listen to music (e.g., Reisman 1950; Hatch and Watson 1974), how music figures in the lives of communities (e.g., Lynd and Lynd 1929; Coleman 1961), and how musical tastes and preferences vary across a population (e.g., Lazarsfeld and the Bureau of Applied Social Research 1946; Schuessler 1948). The emphasis on production that came together in the 1970s did little to address such issues. Those employing the production of culture perspective, for example, often focused more on how producers understood and imagined their audience than on the audience itself. Moreover, as Grazian (2004a) notes, ethnographies in the early 1970s mostly involved the production of music instead of its reception.

The fate of reception scholarship improved as music sociologists and others moved beyond the limits of production approaches. Scholars associated with the Birmingham School offer an important example. Beginning in the mid-1970s, they penned a series of studies that address the role that music plays in various subcultures (e.g., Chambers 1976; Hebdige 1976). Their efforts presaged both the thriving literatures on subcultures and “music scenes” that extend beyond music sociology and the proliferation of sociological perspectives that directly address the reception that ranges from individuals to populations (see Bennett 2004; Grazian 2004; Peterson 2005). Interestingly, some of this proliferation occurred as production scholars also turned their attention to reception—including Tia DeNora, Paul DiMaggio, Antoine Hennion, and Richard Peterson.

## INDIVIDUALS AND MUSIC: SELVES AND TECHNOLOGIES

The reception of music begins with individuals who listen for pleasure and incorporate this listening experience into their daily existence. While psychologists and others have devoted much effort to the mental and physical processes involved in listening (e.g., Hargreaves and North 1997; Sloboda 2004), sociologists have also taken up this endeavor. Tia DeNora (2000, 2003; see also DeNora and Belcher 2000) offers perhaps the definitive sociological statement on the topic. In contrast to the common sociological emphasis on music as “product” and the musicological emphasis on music as “text,” DeNora highlights the microlevel processes by which music “gets into” social life via the mind and body (i.e., music as “practice”). Music serves as a resource for her interviewees when they engage in a number of activities—including the management of emotions, the construction of a self-identity, the negotiation of commercial establishments that offer background music, and the remembrance of relationships. Music also serves as a mechanism for “entraining” bodies—as when it provides cues for movement, soothes infants in neonatal units, and facilitates an invigorating aerobics session. That is, music provides a “technology of the self” whereby individuals both actively use music and are caught up in its properties (see also Gomart and Hennion 1999). DeNora thus offers a counterpart to Sudnow’s (1978) work on improvisation, showing how listeners also engage music in both cognitive and corporal fashions and a complement to sociologists who consider how individuals use music to negotiate such things as aging and spirituality (e.g., Wuthnow 2003; Kotarba 2005).

Whereas DeNora (2002) demonstrates how music provides a technology of the self, other scholars examine how music listeners make use of various technologies. Some offer an historical perspective on this theme. When considering technologies that serve as material intermediaries between music and individuals (e.g., phonograph

recordings), Hennion (2001) heralds a new type of listener “endowed with an ability which no-one possessed before the 20th century, represented by the technical availability of a historical musical repertoire dating from the Middle Ages to the present day” (p. 4). To a certain degree, this new type resonates with other historical developments. First, individuals in the late 1800s and early 1900s confronted many new ways to listen—such as stethoscopes and sonically enhanced architectural spaces—so the phonograph was simply a part of this broader transformation (Channan 1995; Thompson 2002; Sterne 2003). Second, this new listener engages in tendencies that predate recordings. In France of the 1800s, for instance, enthusiasts heralded the once-marginal music of Bach as the epitome of fine music, thereby recasting the canon of classical music as emanating from Bach and bearing his influence. The classical music that later appeared in recordings likewise involved such reconfigurations, as listeners grappled with a growing musical past and the “best” way to apprehend it (see Seifert 1994, 1995, 2001; Hennion 1997; Hennion and Fauquet 2001; Maisonneuve 2001). Still, this new type also represents a significant departure from the past. Listening is no longer solely linked to live performance and, in turn, is easily diffused to those who once lacked easy access to such venues. Furthermore, the new listener is able to devise idiosyncratic rituals and mind-sets for pursuing musical enjoyment in the privacy of the home (see Katz 1998; Douglas 1999; Gomart and Hennion 1999; Hennion 2001; Maisonneuve 2001; Perlman 2004).

Other scholars approach this theme by considering recent technologies that supply listeners with new resources for navigating daily life. A provocative ethnography reveals that individuals use personal stereos (e.g., Walkmans) to aestheticize their urban environment—providing a sound track of their own choosing for spaces on which they normally have little impact—and to keep urban strangers at a distance, because conversation is difficult when users have earphones in place and music in play. In fact, users of these devices report that they are somewhat “invisible” in urban settings, because others apparently assume that the users’ attention is elsewhere (Bull 2000). Aficionados make use of technologies in a fashion that is sometimes deemed illegal (e.g., bootlegs, peer-to-peer sharing) so as to gather and enjoy (sprawling) collections of musical recordings as well as to mine the work of particular musicians (e.g., Cooper and Harrison 2001; Lysloff 2003; Condry 2004; Marshall 2004). Karaoke—an audience-participation technology that emerged in Japan and since diffused to much of the world—allows individuals to pursue amateur performance in convivial (if not blatantly commercial) settings, thereby fostering musical pleasures in urban spaces (e.g., Adams 1996; Mitsui and Hosokawa 1998; Drew 2001). While these studies on selves and technologies encompass various theoretical perspectives, they all push the reception literature in ways that production perspectives do not, and they highlight the individual variability that underlies those groups that engage in musical reception.

## GROUPS AND MUSIC: MEMBERSHIP AND MOBILIZATION

Although musical reception can be a private and isolated activity (e.g., individuals listening to iPods while jogging), much scholarship shows that it is also a group endeavor—especially as those with similar preferences and tastes can gravitate toward each other (see Bourdieu 1984). Indeed, Negus and Román Velázquez (2002) challenge sociologists to examine how it is that particular musics and groups become historically linked. In doing so, they argue, we avoid the analytical trap of simply claiming that some groups have a natural affinity for certain types of music. Sociologists often rise to their challenge when addressing the themes of membership and mobilization.

Social scientists and humanists have approached the first theme in several ways. One stream of scholarship somewhat bears the imprint of cultural Marxism and focuses on post-World War II youth subcultures with views and practices that run counter to the mainstream (see Hall and Jefferson 1976; Turner 1990). It has, thus, inspected subcultures that are centered on such genres as heavy metal, punk, goth, and alternative music (e.g., Willis 1978; Hebdige 1979; Laing 1985; Arnett 1993; Kruse 1993; Leblanc 1999; Hodgkinson 2002). Many of these studies tend to gloss over musical content and, instead, emphasize the lifestyle elements that mark these musically based groupings—such as fashion and behavior in public spaces—as well as the marginal position of subculture members compared with the broader society. In other words, they more often have hints of musical reception than actual details. Still, some of these studies do edge music to the fore. Weinstein (1991), for example, discusses the rhythm and timbre that lie at the heart of heavy metal and that imbue it with sonic power; she also finds that members of this subculture take great pride in their love of and familiarity with the content of heavy metal, including the technical prowess demonstrated by metal guitarists (see also Walser 1993). A few studies stand in contrast to the subculture stream by focusing on consensus and the construction of community (e.g., Titon 1988; Gardner 2004). When examining the indigenous practice of “Sacred Harp” singing in the Southern United States, Laura Clawson (2004) demonstrates how flexible this ongoing construction can be. Southern families that have long participated in this traditional form of music at their local churches find themselves hosts to Northern “seekers” who are enthusiastic newcomers to this genre. Yet given their mutual love of Sacred Harp, these Southern conservatives and Northern liberals form a community that transcends their differences.

A final stream deals with the theme of membership by heeding music scenes—those collections of actors and relationships that center on particular musical styles (Straw 1991). In offering the concept of scene, its contributors are moving beyond what they deem to be limitations of the subculture approach (e.g., Straw 1991; Bennett



2004; Peterson and Bennett 2004). Hence, they (a) expand their analysis to include more than youths that are counterposed to a dominant order, (b) consider that membership can be fluid, with some individuals moving in and out of a scene with relative ease, and (c) emphasize that local scenes can also be linked to other scenes. Román Velázquez's (1999) work on salsa demonstrates what this conceptual shift has to offer. She begins by tracing the global paths of both Latin Americans and salsa music and their respective arrivals in London. Rather than carrying their identity with them, she argues, Latin Americans recreate their identities anew as they relocate in various countries. Moreover, others play a role in locally defining the Latin identity. The London salsa clubs that attract Latin Americans also attract those that admire this musical genre and the exoticness and/or romanticism that it evokes for them, thereby altering and shaping important sites in which Latin American identity is pieced together. Thus, the salsa scene in London is heterogeneous in terms of its participants (rather than homogeneous, as the subcultural approach sometimes suggests) and its local manifestation is intertwined with other scenes around the world, such as in New York. Other contributors to this literature similarly unpack how local scene participants construct an identity by drawing on (and transforming) musical materials that flow from beyond their locale—even when that "locale" is a virtual one located on the World Wide Web (e.g., Bennett 1999a, 1999b, 2002; Mitchell 1996; Harris 2000; Kibby 2000; Lee and Peterson 2004).

While research on first theme sees the solidarity that music can inspire, research dealing with the second theme highlights how music can both spur dissent (e.g., Binder 1993; Rossman 2004) and serve as a rallying standard (e.g., Cerulo 1989; Roy 2004). Indeed, a recent flurry of works draws on variants of social movement theory and argues that music provides an important resource for the mobilization of protest (e.g., Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Eyerman 2002; Steinberg 2004; Trapp 2005). Music can spur unrest when its lyrics call attention to social problems and suggest actions by which to correct those problems. During a period when onetime factory workers enjoyed success as "hillbilly" musicians—the dissemination of their highly critical lyrics via performance venues and radio facilitated unrest among Southern textile workers, with some 400,000 workers walking off the job between 1929 and 1934 (Roscigno and Danaher 2001, 2004; Roscigno, Danaher, and Summers-Effler 2002; Danaher and Roscigno 2004). Such mobilization need not rest on explicitly critical lyrics, however. For instance, some Italian audiences seized on Verdi operas that contained innocuous lyrics and reinterpreted them as addressing the political situation of the day (Stamatov 2002). Nor does this mobilization require a unified and/or homogenous audience. Hip-hop lyrics can be so resonant as to bring together African Americans who live in urban poverty with African Americans who have educational credentials and professional success (Watkins 2001). Such work, then,

confirms DeNora's (2003) position that music "gets into life" both at the individual and collective levels.

## POPULATIONS AND MUSIC: CULTURAL CAPITAL AND OMNIVORES

Whereas reception scholarship at the individual level often sees pleasure and enjoyment, reception scholarship at the aggregate level takes note of class, status, and inequality. Consequently, the work of Bourdieu figures prominently in at least two ways, thereby inspiring music sociologists and others to plumb the themes of cultural capital and cultural omnivores.

Bourdieu and Passeron ([1970] 1990) argue that schools are not neutral sites in which success simply stem from effort and ability. Instead, schools favor the disposition, styles, and proficiencies of middle- and upper-class students—specialized knowledge known as "cultural capital" (see Bourdieu 1984). As a result, these affluent students enter school with an initial advantage, and their advantage increases over time, because academic success and advancement come more easily to them than to their working-class counterparts. Given the myth of meritocracy, such differences in success are attributed to individual performance rather than class differences in cultural capital. In short, this argument suggests that familiarity with high culture—including esteemed music—plays a role in the reproduction of inequality. Their argument has since inspired much research. DiMaggio (1982a) provides an early effort when he posits (and finds) that schools reward those individuals who both know and enjoy classical music—even though such fluency is not always part of the formal curriculum. In the wake of much research on the topic, sociologists and others have debated both the mixed findings that have emerged and the inconsistent ways in which survey researchers have conceptualized cultural capital (e.g., Holt 1998; Kingston 2001). Yet if we take a rather generous operationalization of cultural capital—that is, familiarity with, proficiency in, and/or involvement with high culture (e.g., classical music) on the part of students and/or their parents—the research reveals that cultural capital, among other things, can facilitate success in secondary education (e.g., high scores on standardized tests, high grade point averages) and can foster subsequent success (e.g., progressing to the next educational level, conferring with counselors, attending elite colleges) (Aschaffenburg and Maas 1997; DiMaggio 1982a; DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell 1999; Dumais 2002; Kaufman and Gabler 2004).

While music sociologists are mindful of Bourdieu's argument regarding the educational realm, they are also drawn to his argument regarding the aesthetic realm. Bourdieu (1984) argues that aesthetic preferences and competencies are ultimately class based. Unlike their working-class counterparts, members of the middle and upper classes are removed from economic concerns

regarding daily needs and necessities. Consequently, they have time and resources to develop appreciation for the form and style of art (e.g., art for art's sake) rather than the appreciation for its function (e.g., entertainment) that is shown by members of the working class. These classes, in turn, pass on their respective aesthetic dispositions to their children. Such class-based differences matter not only in the educational system but also in daily interaction—because people associate with those who share similar tastes.

Music sociologists have followed up on Bourdieu's argument in several ways. Some have complicated his notion of cultural capital, even suggesting other types of cultural capital. For instance, Bryson (1996) relies on survey research to assess the symbolic boundaries that individuals raise between each other, as demonstrated by their musical preferences. Given her interpretation of Bourdieu's argument, she expected that high-status individuals will dislike musical genres that are not part of high culture. She finds, instead, a very different pattern. High-status individuals (i.e., those with high levels of education) tend to have the fewest "disliked" genres; the few genres that they dislike, moreover, tend to be associated with low-status individuals. As a result, Bryson modifies Bourdieu's argument and suggests that multicultural capital is now in play, whereby advantages accrue to those who are well versed with a variety of music rather than conversant only with music associated with high culture. Meanwhile, Thornton (1996) relies on ethnographic research to see the symbolic boundaries raised by British teens who frequent music clubs. She finds, in particular, that these style-conscious teens draw sharp distinctions between themselves and teens who are not members of their clique, between the underground and the mainstream, and between authentic and commodified music. As a result, she modifies Bourdieu's argument by positing the importance of "subcultural" capital—thereby noting the cultural currency and distinctions at work in this domain.

Other scholars have gone in a slightly different direction by querying the expansive musical tastes of high-status individuals (see also Holt 1998). When analyzing U.S. survey data for 1982 and 1992, Peterson (1992) and Peterson and Kern (1996) find that high-status individuals, in addition to liking classical music, also tend to like more musical genres than other listeners, and that this "omnivorous" tendency has grown more pronounced over the decade. Peterson also suggests that the U.S. taste structure resembles an inverted pyramid—with high-status omnivores at the top (i.e., many musical preferences) and low-status univores at the bottom (i.e., few preferences). At

least three types of research arose in response to their findings. First, some problematize the distinction between "omnivores" and "univores"—pushing for a conceptualization that taps more than the number of liked genres. In pursuing a qualitative analyses of survey data (e.g., correspondence analysis) and attending to those who are decisive and indecisive regarding genre preferences, Sonnett (2004) finds various types of univores (e.g., those who like only country music) and omnivores (e.g., those who like pop and country music but have mixed feelings about classical music). Consequently, he suggests that the taste structure looks more like a parabola, with decisive omnivores and univores occupying the ends and mixed opinion folks occupying the middle (see also Mark 1998). Second, some researchers have turned their attention to longitudinal patterns, investigating such things as whether the omnivore pattern is growing more pronounced over time. Considering survey data on attendance at performing arts events (e.g., jazz, classical) over three points in time, DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004) find some evidence in support of the omnivore thesis: The highly educated are attending less orchestral concerts over time, but they are attending more jazz concerts. That is, cosmopolitan (rather than highbrow) tastes seem to be the coin of the realm (see also López-Sintas and Katz-Gerro 2005). Finally, a wave of research addresses the extent to which the omnivore thesis attains in other nations (e.g., van Eijck 2001; Vander Stichle and Laermans 2006), with Peterson (2005) identifying research on 12 nations. While the omnivore issue is far from resolved, the dramatic flourishing of this scholarship is but another sign of music sociology's recent vitality.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, sociology is uniquely equipped to elucidate the context in which music production occurs and to parse patterns of reception. It is hoped that it will become better equipped for the direct study of the remaining domain, that of musical content. Moreover, given the recent boom that music sociology has enjoyed, which includes an expanding array of theoretical perspectives, its short-term trajectory seems well set, with contributors researching such thriving issues as omnivorous tastes and the implications of new technologies. Finally, its long-term vitality will benefit from current scholars building on the works of the past, such as Weber ([1921] 1958), and from contributors to one domain (e.g., reception) incorporating the insights and advances in other domains (e.g., production, content).

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

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This field involves the study of the social context of theater, motion pictures, drama, music, dance, and opera. The performing arts are distinguished from the visual arts such as painting, sculpture, and photography since they are expressed somatically, using the artist's own body, face, and/or presence as a medium. The performing arts also differ from the plastic arts, which use material objects such as clay, metal, or paint, which can be molded or transformed to create some art object. Of course, this distinction is not absolute since the performing arts often involve some form of plastic art, such as props and scenery. For example, modern dance uses space like any other three-dimensional object made of wood or clay by occupying it, relating to it, and influencing the perception of it (Ness 2004:137).

Current research in the sociology of the performing arts provides a systematic way to study the performing arts as a social process wedding art, culture, emotion, and the body as part of the systematic study of society. Empirical studies focusing on the social context of art forms focus on the different aspects of either production or consumption processes (Gornostaeva 2004:92). For example, opera combines elements of singing and dancing while employing visual arts, such as painting, to create a visual spectacle on the stage. Whether the words, the music, or dance movements are paramount has been the subject of debate for several centuries. For example, theatrical dancing was originally embedded in opera, gradually becoming a separate art form in the late eighteenth century after audiences began to attend ballet as performance separate from rather than within opera.

Sociological aspects of the performing arts include all those elements pertaining to the performing arts as a social

and cultural phenomenon. Currently, research on these aspects is concentrated in anthropology, but there is a growing interest by sociologists in considering the performing arts as social institutions. Sociological research on the performing arts ranges from trying to formulate an understanding of the social roots of artistic production, distribution, and consumption to work on the relationship between arts institutions and audiences or communities (Griswold 1986; DiMaggio 1987; Zolberg 1990). This area also overlaps with American pragmatism and symbolic interactionist theoretical interests in the political aspects of interactive performance as empowerment leading to participatory democracy (Denzin 2003). Sociology has always had an uneasy relationship with studying the particular, but recent developments in sociological theory, particularly postmodernist articulations of the authenticity of personal experience, has opened up a dialogue between those concerned with objective formulations (structural functionalism, conflict theory, and exchange theory) and those theories explaining subjective experiences, including symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology (Gornostaeva 2004:91–92). Finally, the sociology of the performing arts offers a way to better understand the inherent contradictions of structure and agency. This essay will provide a general overview of the subfield of the sociology of the performing arts and conclude with a discussion of the insights this area offers for sociology in general.

### THE PERFORMING ARTS IN SOCIETY

Sociology of the performing arts is a subtopic of “art and society” that emerged as a specialized field in the 1950s

(Wilson 1964; Weil and Hartley 1975). This topic explores the relationship between social processes and creative artists and is concerned with a wide variety of aesthetic products, including literature, the visual arts, and music (Alexander 2003). This area is particularly concerned with the social institution of theater, especially in how it relates to music (DeNora 2003), dance (Thomas 1995), and opera (Evans 1999).

The sociology of the performing arts is by its very nature interdisciplinary, drawing scholars from a variety of fields in both the humanities and social sciences. Most recently, in 1999, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) launched a multidisciplinary initiative to foster a social science investigation of the arts (Liben and Szechter 2002:385). This program was broadly aimed at developing social science interest and scholarship on the arts and to bring social science theory and methods to bear on a broad range of issues in the arts, including the individual experience of art, the social, historical, and economic context of that experience, and cultural policy.

This SSRC initiative, led by the pioneering sociologist of art, Howard Becker, builds on his previous work on the sociology of art, *Art Worlds* (1982), which examines the social production of art, particularly painting. His seminal works nevertheless pertain to analyzing the performing arts since he initially recognized that art is a collective process, in how it is produced and consumed, regardless of form. Becker demystified the arts as “miraculous revelations” making them “objects for naturalistic analysis” (Zolberg 1990:2). In doing so, Becker’s work led to the growing interest in the arts as an area of inquiry by social scientists.

Zolberg (1990:29) argues that sociologists have generally neglected the arts as an area of inquiry due to the positivistic nature of American sociology that came to dominate the overall discipline of sociology for several decades. This neglect is also partially related to the fact that sociologists judged the arts as being of far less importance than other issues for their professional concerns and consequently allocated them little space in sociology. The reason the arts are taken more seriously now by sociologists, as well as the general public, is due to (1) their increased subsidization by the state, (2) the collapse of the boundaries between “fine art” and “popular art,” and (3) “mainstream recognition of art previously marginalized, such as the arts of women, ‘amateurs,’ and minorities” (p. 30).

This renewed scholarly interest in the arts is also related to the concerns of sociology’s founding as a discipline in the nineteenth century that prioritized rationality and disembodiment over emotions and the body. The predominance of interest in rationality also led to the overall devaluation of performing arts as an academic concern. These tendencies have been gradually replaced by a growing general interest in taking seriously the embodiment of experience as part of sociological inquiry.

## MIND/BODY DUALISM

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984) laid the theoretical foundations to challenge conceptions of the body as a mere object by focusing on “the relationships between personal identity, the human body and social practices” (Wainwright and Turner 2004:100). Bourdieu’s theoretical insights are particularly important in grounding embodiment with sociological analysis (Turner 1992; Fowler 1997, 2000) in arguing for a new understanding of the body as an agent actively involved in world making and in the production of thought and knowledge.

This section will emphasize dance since the performing arts are primarily expressed somatically, using the artist’s own body as the primary means of expression. Dance also often incorporates other elements of theater, such as a stage and accompanying music. Sociological interest in the performing arts has been marginalized due to its association with emotions and the body rather than rationality and the mind. Prior to the mid-1970s, “sociologists who were interested in the arts . . . were situated on the margins of the discipline . . . ‘often considered eccentric and dilettantish’” (Thomas 1995:18). This is due, in part, to the mind/body dualism in Western culture that dates back to Descartes who articulated the essence of the human subject as constituted through the mind. This privileging of the rational thinking subject has placed the mind in binary opposition to the body, constructing it as a nonverbal object or voiceless ‘other.’ Since the performing arts, especially dance, largely depend on the body, it has led to them not being viewed as legitimate areas of sociological interest.

The Cartesian mind/body dualism was incorporated into the emerging discipline of sociology in the nineteenth century. Sociology focused on problems of modernity; trying to understand the processes of rationalization associated with the rise of industrial society and the development of science. The social role of the performing arts diminished in general and their relevance to human experience was reduced to either psychological or aesthetic aspects. These processes of rationalization that prioritized the intellectual occurred even as the body was becoming the main instrument in capitalist production (Brinson 1983a:104). The general decline in the legitimacy of emotions in industrial society was not limited to the arts alone but also to the general relevancy of ritual and religion (Thomas 1995:9). Even when the arts were considered as a social fact, as by Max Weber (1958) in *The Rational and Social Foundations of Music*, interest was focused on its relationship to processes of rationalization in modernity. The hierarchy of reason mandated that anything pertaining to aesthetic experiences would be an object, not a subject, of sociological inquiry.

Scholarship on the sociology of dance begins with work published by Hammond and Hammond (1979, 1989), Brinson (1983a, 1983b), and Thomas (1995). Hammond and Hammond (1979) apply Weber’s ideas on rationalization to analyze changes in ballet technique that gradually increased the physical demand on dancer’s capacity for linear

extension in the use of the legs and arms. Furthermore, this increased range of motion was accompanied by an unprecedented “fleetness and precision” due to the “toothpick” ideal ballerina body (Hammond and Hammond 1979:601). As ballet became more technically demanding, its aesthetic changed, dancers became lighter, longer, and leaner.

This approach toward historicizing ballet in terms of the development of its technique rather than “dominant performances and personalities” (Hammond and Hammond 1989:15) provided a basis of comparison with technical developments in the other performing arts as well as other areas (Van Delinder 2003, 2005a, 2005b). The technical history of ballet “exhibits a discernable order, an accumulative character” (Hammond and Hammond 1979:602), a process of rationalization that is generally characteristic of modernity. However, after Weber, rationality is not a uniform process; it proceeds at different rates in different institutional spheres.

In 1983, British dance scholar Peter Brinson (1983a) outlined some initial scholastic tasks toward a more coherent sociology of dance. Brinson thought that the recent intellectual interest in culture laid some promising theoretical groundwork to begin systematically examining the relevance of dance in industrial society (p. 101). Conceptualizing dance as a “social fact” Brinson argued that “dance can be as much a *social* response to human experience as it can be psychological or aesthetic, and we need to study the nature of that social response” (p. 104). Dance rituals are an integral part of national cultural identities, ranging from ballroom dancing being used as social education to reinforce traditional attitudes and customs to being used “to develop community action and strength” in public protests in a variety of places, including Western Europe and South America (p. 104).

Brinson also argues that dance is a part of collective experience, an expression of community that fills a void in industrial society. As a mode of nonverbal communication, dance is one way to integrate the arts back into society without worrying about language barriers. The bias toward literacy in industrial society led to the devaluation of dance as a mode of communication (Brinson 1983b:60). What makes dance interesting is its ability to communicate emotions and feelings that accompany ideas. In addition, dance fills an aesthetic, political, and social value (i.e., dances of national identity reflect the body politic). Thomas (1995) formulated a more comprehensive sociology of dance partially as a response to its neglect as an area of concern by sociologists. Thomas also points out that although dance is “bound up with the processes of gender roles and identification,” it has been largely overlooked by many feminist scholars (pp. 4–5). What is particularly puzzling is why dance has not been taken seriously by feminists since it has long been the target of “negative puritanical sexual connotations,” thus making it rich material to explore in terms of race and gender representations in contemporary society (p. 5).

Looking more generally at themes of embodiment, contemporary sociological theories of embodiment

beginning with Mauss ([1934] 1973), Goffman (1959, 1971, 1979), and Bourdieu (1990) focus on understanding social action as performance or performing ‘bodily presentation’ of largely unconscious cues communicating meaning to others. An example of this overlap between dance theorists and sociologists is Morris (2001:56) who notes the similarities between the way dancers use their bodies as art and Mauss’s early interest in “everyday movement, such as the social construction of walking or shoveling,” latter followed up by Goffman’s attention to the embodiment of communication, particularly at the level of the unconscious. Finally, Bourdieu’s corporal theory weds Mauss’s anthropological sensitivity toward materiality of human culture and Goffman’s more nuanced conceptual understanding of bodily movement. Bourdieu’s (1990) notion of bodily hexis is a “political mythology realized, embodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking and thereby feeling and thinking.” Bourdieu argues that the body, as separate from the mind, constitutes a type of intelligence, a physicality long appreciated by dancers (Foster 1996:15) and other performing artists.

One fruitful avenue of inquiry combining these different approaches from sociology and the humanities would be to examine the objectification of the female body in modern ballet. In the early twentieth century ballet became less representational and more abstract; ballets became movement of the body in space rather than conveying emotions or a character in a story. The female body that was further objectified as an androgynous ideal of the body became synonymous with a “ballet body.” This transformation of women’s bodies in modern ballet is similar to other processes of modernity that resulted in the domination, subjection, and finally objectification of the individual self or personality through technical innovation.

In the world of ballet, choreographers like George Balanchine adopted modernist notions of regularity, consistency, and predictability, making the choreographer, not the dancer, in control of the dancer’s movements. This process also resulted in women’s bodies being transformed and regulated, not only in ballet but also in other spheres, such as the home. Balanchine’s carefully measured and precise choreography in ballets like *Apollo* (1928), *The Four Temperaments* (1946), and *Agon* (1957) resulted in the appropriation of the dancer’s autonomy and control over individual artistic expression (Van Delinder 2005b). The result of this was the production of disciplined, objective female bodies whose subjectivity was constituted, or made, by the choreographer (Van Delinder 2005a).

At the same time, these changes in ballet were taking place concurrently with other structural changes to the nature of modern work. Synott (1992:97) argues, “constructions of the body, particularly in matters of gender and race, were in flux.” As Thomas (1995) argues, even in the highly structured work world of ballet, female dancers “often confronted conventional (patriarchal) representations of women’s bodies through their expansive use of space and their attire” (Thomas 1995:5). The

twentieth century also saw the emergence of the modern dance movement, which was mostly led by women. This is an area that has only been recently noticed by sociologists (Thomas 1995, 2003).

## CONTRADICTIONS OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES AND RATIONALITY

Sociology of the performing arts also provides a vocabulary and framework to examine how social reality generally is constantly being organized and reorganized. First, by focusing on the embodiment of action, it draws attention to how “actors produce themselves as identifiable agents and how this production is achieved through ‘aesthetic reflexive’ practices” (DeNora 2003:91). Second, it acknowledges the importance of the emotions, particularly aesthetic experiences, which have been largely lost in modernity. Interest in the body as content (Foster 1996; Morris 2001) rather than as the passive recipient of discipline (Foucault 1979) has been accompanied by recent interest in the idea of renewal of social life as a “performance” (Denzin 2003).

Research in the sociology of the performing arts incorporates both referential (objective, cognitive) and emotive (subjective, expressive) analysis. For example, Jordan and Thomas (1994) offer an important insight into how dance can be studied in this way. In discussing Balanchine’s 1947 ballet *The Four Temperaments*, the ballet can be discussed as an extrinsic form representing “existing gender relations in the ‘real world’ outside the dance . . . a symmetry between the dancer’s movements and the ways in which women are subordinated by the ‘male gaze’ or look” in patriarchal society (Jordan and Thomas 1994:7). While dancers would focus on its subjective elements, “on the intrinsic, structural and connotative features of a dance work” rendering its “referential function . . . subservient to the aesthetic dimension where the focus is on the symbol which is self-referring, as opposed to the sign which is concerned with denotation” (Jordan and Thomas 1994:7–8). Thinking of dance just in terms of its referential characteristics, one would miss what is going on in the moment of the dance performance, or as Becker (2001) says one would miss “the work of art as a thing to be appreciated in itself and for itself, for what it is just by existing” (p. 1). But then the question becomes how to reconcile these two opposing tendencies?

One way this question has been addressed is by the immediate and the consequential aspects of Dewey’s ([1929] 1988d) consummatory experience. The immediacy part of experience is at the level of the individual artist’s creative energy (pp. 188–189). The other aspect of experience—the consequential—provides a relationship between the individual artist to some type of continuum beginning with the past and leading forward into the future. Consummatory experience is the vehicle through which the artist’s power captures for a moment—if only fleeting—the integration of the definite (finite or immediate) with the indefinite (infinite or illimitable). Dewey suggests that the way to resolve this “problematic

situation . . . [of] . . . incompatibility between the traits of an object in its direct individual and unique nature and those traits that belong to it in its relations or continuities” is to incorporate the immediacy of individuality suggested by the consummatory with the consequential (p. 189).

The inherent dualisms of Western philosophy mentioned earlier in this essay first led Dewey to search for a possible way to value immediacy (ecstatic) within the context of rationality. Intrigued by the power of the arts to evoke “simply [the aesthetic] experience itself, having experiences at their best and at their fullest,” Dewey’s interest led him to investigate the arts (painting as well as dance) as a potential way to achieve a balance between the conscious and the unconscious, reason and emotion and, thereby, unify the mind/body dualism that had been split asunder by modernity.

In *Art as Experience*, Dewey (1934) argues that aesthetics had become an experience separated from the daily living, or what Dewey terms “the practical.” To approach the problem of integrating the aesthetic experience into everyday life, he undertook a historical analysis of the arts (Dewey [1938–1939] 1988a, [1938–1939] 1988b, [1929–1930] 1988c, [1938–1939] 1988d, [1929] 1988e). This analysis led him to the conclusion that the arts were a collectivity with the potential to create a shared aesthetic appreciation between the artist and their art as well as the art object and the viewer. Dewey’s interest in the arts was related to his overall search for suitable tactics in creating participatory democracy. Dewey recognized that the arts had the capacity to evoke a consummatory experience with “the characteristics of the human experiences that have the quality . . . we call esthetic” (Dewey [1938–1939] 1988d:358). The value of consummatory experience, evoked aesthetically, is in its ability to create an immediacy that has largely been lost in modernity: “Moments of intense emotional appreciation when . . . the beauty and harmony of existence is disclosed in experiences which are the immediate consummation of all for which we long” (Dewey [1929] 1988e:241). The power of the aesthetic experience was something Dewey sought to bring down to the level of everyday life and integrate it into the consequential order of experience.

Echoing Dewey’s sentiments, Denzin (2003:187) recently invited “symbolic interactionists to think through the practical, progressive politics of a performative cultural studies . . . [in order to create] . . . an emancipatory discourse connecting critical pedagogy with new ways of writing and performing culture” (p. 187). The genealogy of this emancipatory discourse can be traced back to Mead’s (1938:460) initial model of the act as “discursive and performative,” opening the way to understand performance as imitation (Goffman 1959), liminality or construction (Turner 1986), and as motion or movement (Conquergood 1998; Denzin 2003:187). These three dimensions of performance—imitation, construction, and movement—outline the emancipatory discourse of gender and race, which is one of the most promising directions for the sociology of performing arts.

Over a century ago, W. E. B. Du Bois (1903) addressed the problem of the color line in American society as being enacted using “definitions and meanings of blackness . . . intricately linked to issues of theatre and performance” (Denzin 2003:188). Du Bois recognized that an all-black theater was one way for blacks to assert agency and start to combat racism and white privilege. Du Bois’s (1926) idea of politicizing race by performing it as radical theater (Elam 2001) was also carried out by dancer and anthropologist Katherine Dunham (Perpener 2001; Aschenbrenner 2002). Noting the lack of dance venues featuring African dance or other cultural forms of the African Diaspora in New York of the 1920s, Dunham began to create both dancers and audiences for these forgotten cultural practices based on her anthropological research in the Caribbean and Africa. Dunham’s pedagogy, later called the Dunham Technique, fused African and European cultures to create a new, modern style of moving. The staging of her choreography challenged her largely white audiences to confront non-European culture and social issues facing African Americans in the United States. As a dancer and choreographer on Broadway and in Hollywood films, Dunham opened doors for future generations of black choreographers and dancers to celebrate their African heritage, encouraging greater understanding of the African Diaspora cultures (Emery 1988). As a teacher, she promoted the study and preservation of these Diaspora dances not as museum pieces but to foster cross-cultural communication of ideas and knowledge. Through theater and dance performances, black Americans attempted to “break through ‘sedimented’ meanings and normative traditions” (Denzin 2003:188).

The binary discourses that racialize bodies as black or white also engender them as male or female (Butler 1993; Baner 1998). Transgressive performances of race and gender also provide ways to blur the boundaries enacted by civil restraint. For example, contesting gender identities creates “spaces for a queer politics of resistance” (Denzin 2003:190).

Using the bodily techniques of theater to transcend conventional understandings of race and gender has also been used to engage in praxis or political empowerment. The potential of performance tactics to disrupt the hegemony of the bourgeoisie developed along with democratizing effects of the mass media in the early twentieth century. Walter Benjamin ([1937] 1976) saw the possibility to wrestle control of the production of ideology using technological developments in photography (in both still photography and in moving pictures). Using cameras, the masses now had the tools to demystify art by being able to mechanically reproduce it; they also had the ability to disrupt the bourgeois sense of time through film techniques of reordering the presumed linear sequence of reality. Benjamin’s interest in generally disrupting the performance of consumption enacted through the street life of Paris’ Arcades was later elaborated on and enacted through the situationist praxis of Guy Debord (1967), self-proclaimed leader of the Situationist International. Debord

recognized performance and performing as transmuting everything that had once been real and directly lived into a representational shadow or what Baudrillard (1988, 2005) would later term *hyperreality*.

## SOCIOLOGY OF THE PERFORMING ARTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The sociology of the performing arts promises to be a rich area of inquiry in the twenty-first century. As an emerging subfield, the sociology of the performing arts touches on many core themes of sociological theory, the rise of modernity and its accompanying processes of rationalization. The sociology of the performing arts can broaden our understanding of the social context of theater, motion pictures, drama, music, dance, and opera. The relevance of the performing arts as part of, rather than separate from, social life is discussed in recent research on the significance of opera (Evans 1999), particularly its overlooked role in political activism (Stamatov 2002). The “cultural objects” studied in the sociology of the performing arts (dance, opera, theater) also contribute to a better understanding of how they, as all the arts, are part of a social system (Luhmann 2000). Studies on the transnational careers of ballet dancers can lead to a better understanding of the global context of artistic work and the realization that ballet companies, like other artistic fields, “are social worlds with their own power dynamics, yet subordinated to larger power structures in society” (Wulff 1998:33).

Research on the social context of London theater has led to the development of the cultural diamond conceptual tool helping us to understand the complex social relationships between art, society, creators, and consumers (Griswold 1986, 1994). As a heuristic device, the cultural diamond sharpens our understanding of “any cultural object’s relationship to the social world” (Griswold 1994:15).

In addition, viewing the performing arts as a “sequence of events” offers new opportunities to alter our understanding of time, conceiving it as an unfolding process by innovative thrusts in technique and form (Luhmann 2000:21, 228). This helps us appreciate the fluidity of social reality as no longer being fixed as either in time or space. The performing arts “depend on light—a visual medium—whereas the lyric, like narrative (the epic, the novel) relies on language” (p. 116).

Finally, by integrating and understanding theories of performance and the body in terms of the politics of resistance in participatory democracy (West 1989), it helps us to avoid nihilism or meaninglessness of human activity—since the performing arts are human aesthetic activity defined by the meaning of the participants and observers—while retaining a focus on the immediate and the local. Further research on cultural objects of the performing arts will also continue to remind us not to lose sight of how the individual or particular are embedded in macrosocial processes.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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The sociology of science and the sociology of technology are small but growing topics within the wider field of sociology but are key parts of the emerging interdisciplinary field of science and technology studies (Biagioli 1999; Jasanoff et al. 1995). In this review I first focus on the sociology of science and then briefly examine the sociology of technology.

### THE SOCIOLOGY OF SCIENCE

The sociology of science (Collins 1983; Lynch 1993; Mulkay 1980; Shapin 1995; Zuckerman 1988) was founded by Robert K. Merton—an achievement recognized by his award of the National Medal of Science in 1994. Merton argued in his doctoral dissertation, published as the monograph *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (Merton [1938] 1970), that the rise of modern science could be explained in terms of religion and a number of other factors associated with England's growing mercantile economy, such as the military and technology. Known subsequently as the *Merton thesis*, this attempt to explain the emergence of science by “external” factors rather than by the internal growth of scientific ideas has provoked and continues to provoke much debate (Cohen 1990; Hall 1963; Shapin 1988). For many scientists, and some scholars in history and philosophy of science, it is anathema to explain the development of science in terms of social factors. Indeed, this points to one of the difficulties that the field of sociology of science has faced. For many

sociologists, especially those who cast their own work as being putatively scientific, it is profoundly destabilizing to encounter an area such as the sociology of science that offers sociological explanations of science. Merton ([1937] 1973) was all too aware of the reflexive conundrums raised by the sociology of knowledge, but they continue to haunt the field (Ashmore 1989; Woolgar 1988).

In charting the territory for the new field of sociology of science, Merton outlined a program that focused on the institutional means, and in particular the reward system, whereby science produces “certified knowledge.” He was particularly concerned with how science functions in a democratic society and saw a direct link between the disastrous scientific agendas of totalitarian regimes and their rejection of democracy. Merton argued that a set of norms or institutional imperatives give science its special character. These norms along with the associated reward and sanctioning systems ensure the production of certified knowledge. Merton ([1942] 1973) famously termed the specific set of social norms for science as *CUDOS*: communism (in the sense of communal sharing of discoveries and information—later renamed communalism), universalism (assessment of claims not based on class, gender, race, religion, and so on), disinterestedness (scientists have no special interests beyond serving their own community), and organized skepticism (claims are initially greeted with skepticism). These social norms operate in tandem with a set of technical procedural norms that scientists follow, such as the need for empirical verification, logical consistency, and replication of experiments.



Merton formulated a research program for studying science as an institution. Questions such as the following could be answered: “What are the exact norms of science and how, and under what circumstances, do deviations from the norms occur (Zuckerman 1988)?” “How does the reward system work and how fair is it (Hagstrom 1965)?” and “How is science stratified (Cole and Cole 1973; Zuckerman 1988)?” New tools of bibliometrical analysis (Price 1961) were used to investigate the growth and demise of disciplines, subdisciplines, specialties, and the like.

By the 1970s, this research program had largely run its course (although see Cole 1992). Scholars became increasingly dissatisfied with the analytical salience and evidentiary basis of norms. Barnes and Dolby (1970) and Mulkay (1976) argued that the norms of science were better treated as flexible ideologies or sets of justifications—justifications that scientists could appeal to in certain situations. Mulkay (1976) further questioned whether the reward system in science actually leads to the institutionalization of the Mertonian norms. Rewards in science seem to depend on the use-value of a piece of scientific knowledge for other scientists, and thus is independent of whether or not the norms have been followed.

A landmark study was carried out by Ian Mitroff (1974). By conducting rounds of interviews with the Apollo moon scientists each time a new piece of moon rock was brought back to Earth, Mitroff was able to establish that, among this community at least, scientists relished not following Merton’s norms. Indeed, being emotionally committed to a scientific idea and pursuing it vigorously, sometimes in the face of the evidence, were seen as being the hallmarks of good science. Mitroff’s study was cast as verification of an earlier Mertonian idea—that a weakly institutionalized body of “counter-norms,” such as partisanship, particularism, and the like, existed alongside the scientific norms and that this complicated the picture (Mitroff 1974). But it appeared to many as if the writing was on the wall and that a new approach was needed.

That new approach emerged largely in the United Kingdom. Particularly influential was an article by Richard Whitley (1972) on “Black Boxism” within the sociology of science. Whitley argued that the Mertonian approach treated the content of science as a “black box.” The careers of scientists and their institutions could be given sociological explanations, but this left the content of science untouched. In other words, how scientific knowledge itself, for instance claims about neutrinos or DNA, might be influenced by social processes was not investigated. It was from approaches and methods better equipped to understand the actual life-world of the scientist—what they did in the labs and what they argued over in their research—that a new sociology of science would emerge. This approach became known as SSK (sociology of scientific knowledge).

## THE EMERGENCE OF SSK

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The sociology of scientific knowledge can be traced back to long-standing issues in the sociology of knowledge raised by Karl Mannheim (1936) and Max Scheler ([1925] 1960). Mannheim’s work was particularly influential on Barry Barnes (1974) and David Bloor ([1976] 1991) and their formulation of the Strong Programme (see below). While Mannheim had stopped short of including the natural sciences within his sociology of knowledge, Barnes and Bloor argued that even the so-called hard sciences such as physics, biology, and mathematics should be explained sociologically. This opened up a new empirical space for SSK.

SSK is often associated with Thomas Kuhn’s ([1962] 1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which compared scientific revolutions with political revolutions and gave room for social factors in the explanation of scientific change. Kuhn’s work provoked much philosophical interest, including the famous Popper-Kuhn debate (Lakatos and Musgrave 1974). As stated in the foregoing, the Mertonian norms subsumed a particular version of scientific method and epistemology, and part of the challenge to the Mertonian approach has come from the breakdown of this “received view” (Mulkay 1979) within the philosophy of science (Hacking 1983; Hesse 1980; Sismondo 2003). In other words, the increased attention within philosophy of science to such issues as the theory-ladenness of observations, the Duhem-Quine thesis, and problems of theory choice coupled with the demise of the correspondence theory of truth further questioned the notion that scientists followed a set of methodological or epistemological procedures that guaranteed objective knowledge. If a set of such procedures existed, at the very least philosophers of science could not, and still cannot, agree as to what those procedures are.

The actual relationship between Kuhn and SSK is, however, by no means straightforward. Kuhn’s book has been given a variety of readings—not least by Kuhn himself. One reading is quite compatible with Mertonian sociology of science (Pinch [1982] 1997). Many scholars in Britain read Kuhn through the lenses of phenomenology (Berger and Luckman 1967; Garfinkel 1967; Schutz 1973) and the later philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (Winch 1958) and thus took Kuhn’s approach as commensurate with their own (Barnes 1982; Collins and Pinch 1982).

## THE STRONG PROGRAMME

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The Strong Programme is often referred to as the Edinburgh Strong Programme or simply the Edinburgh School. Its founders, David Bloor (trained originally as a philosopher) and Barry Barnes (a sociologist) worked in the context of a new discipline, science studies, established at the University of Edinburgh in 1966. The Edinburgh School also included David Edge, a former radio

astronomer and the founding editor of the leading journal of science studies, *Social Studies of Science*; Donald MacKenzie, a historical sociologist who has carried out influential studies on the growth of statistics (MacKenzie 1981a), ballistic missiles (MacKenzie 1990), mathematical and computer proofs (MacKenzie 2001), and most recently the world of finance (MacKenzie 2003); and Steven Shapin, a historian of science, whose early study of Victorian Edinburgh debates over phrenology became a classic of the Strong Programme (Shapin 1979) and who went on to write with historian of science Simon Schaffer one of the most important books in the sociology and history of science of the 1980s, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Shapin and Schaffer 1985). This landmark study showed how the details of the production of facts in the early Royal Society could be tied to the politics of Restoration England. Shapin (1994), in a further study, has shown how the very conditions whereby trust and assent are given in science depend on rules of gentlemanly conduct. Science becomes yet another arena where issues of trust and credibility are central. Although most of the Strong Programme studies have been historical, one notable exception has been the studies of contemporaneous physics by Andrew Pickering (1984).

One of the founding principles of the Strong Programme is symmetry (Bloor [1976] 1991). This calls for the same sorts of sociological explanation to be offered for what are taken to be true and what are taken to be false beliefs. In other words, sociological explanation should not be reserved for failed beliefs, such as the forgotten radiation of N-rays, thereby assuming that “true” beliefs such as X-rays require no sociological account. This would assume a form of sociological epidemiology whereby we import the social only when things go wrong in science. The commitment to symmetrical explanation follows for Bloor as part of what he calls *naturalistic inquiry*. By this he means that sociologists encounter all sorts of things in the world, whether gay marriage, nuclear weapons, or science and they should not declare that certain objects, such as successful scientific theories, are out-of-bounds to sociological explanation.

Many scientists themselves find symmetry to be counterintuitive. This is because within science the invocation of social factors has become synonymous with error (Gilbert and Mulkay 1984). That is to say scientists themselves turn to the social dimension only when they encounter error. Belief in the phenomenon of cold fusion is seen for them as stemming from irrational social forces such as the pursuit of patent rights by its original proponents (Stanley Pons and Martin Fleishmann) that thereby distorted good scientific practice (Simon 2002). A sociological account based on symmetrical style explanations would not serve up a special social explanation for this one episode.

The Strong Programme’s commitment to naturalistic inquiry means that in general it has sought causal explanations, often arguing that specific social and cognitive

interests guide scientific inquiry. Bloor presented his program as an extension of science itself—for him it was a way by which science could scientifically know itself. Much of the debate over the Strong Programme has been occasioned by philosophers who reject what they take to be the relativism implied by the symmetry principle (Brown 1989; Laudan 1981). One of the strengths of the Strong Programme has been the new empirical studies of science it has generated. Rich in either contemporaneous or historical detail, these “thick descriptions” of science have garnered attention among scholars who might not be wedded to the same programmatic goals (Barnes, Bloor, and Henry 1996).

## THE EMPIRICAL PROGRAMME OF RELATIVISM

Another early influential SSK research program was the Empirical Programme of Relativism (EPOR), as formulated by Harry Collins (1981b) at the Science Studies Centre, Bath University. The title *relativism* was provocative, again for philosophers, but Collins (1981b) has made it clear that the form of relativism is a methodological one. Collins recommended that sociologists follow contemporaneous controversies at the research frontiers of science, thereby forcing the analyst to take a relativistic stance toward the disputed claims because no one yet knew the scientific “truth” as the outcome of the controversy was not yet settled. This program, like Bloor’s, involved a set of methodological strictures that Collins recommended that researchers follow. Stage One involves the demonstration of the *interpretative flexibility* of scientific facts and theories. For instance, during a scientific controversy, particular experimental findings may be interpreted very differently by different scientists. Since most controversies do not last forever and the interpretative flexibility over scientific findings will vanish, a second stage of EPOR involves identifying the *closure* mechanisms, which lead to disputes being settled. A third stage involves identifying how wider social processes shape the process of closure. Collins’s research program would be completed if it could be shown how findings at the laboratory bench were shaped by wider social processes.

The Bath School, as it became known, was highly influential but always small. One legacy of its work is to be found in the popular Golem series of books, which stemmed from Collins’s collaboration with Trevor Pinch (Collins and Pinch 1993, 1998, 2005). Collins’s ([1985] 1992) study of the controversy over physicist Joseph Weber’s claims to detect gravity waves and Pinch’s (1986) study of the search for solar neutrinos are typical of the Bath School style. The book by Shapin and Schaffer (1985), referred to in the foregoing, can be read as an EPOR-type study covering all three stages. By examining the dispute between Robert Boyle and Thomas Hobbes, Shapin and Schaffer were able to demonstrate the

interpretative flexibility of results obtained with Boyle's air pump and then show how closure formed around Boyle's interpretation and how the process as a whole was shaped by the politics of restoration England.

Collins (2004) has recently returned to the topic of gravity waves. He documents how this field has developed from the controversies around the small detectors of the early 1970s through to today's giant gravitational wave interferometers, which require big-science-type organizational infrastructures and funding. Throughout the years, as he has carried out this study, Collins has maintained a very close relationship with his respondents, attending their conferences and participating as much as possible in the main events in the field. This kind of hands-on study, which is a form of continuous participant observation, requires the sociologist to acquire considerable technical mastery of the esoteric field under study. Because the guiding remit of SSK is engagement with knowledge and practices, the sociologist requires a set of skills very different from that found in the early Mertonian-dominated phase of the field. There is no doubt that such studies are technically daunting because a sociologist must acquire enough knowledge to interact meaningfully with the respondents. This means learning some science.

## LABORATORY STUDIES

Another important strand of SSK has come from the anthropological-inspired studies of the detailed practices of laboratory life. During the late 1970s, a number of researchers adopted such methods and immersed themselves in laboratories to study the activities of their "tribes" of scientists. Most famous was the presence of a young French scholar, Bruno Latour, at the Salk Institute in San Diego. Latour, trained as a philosopher and with a smattering of anthropology, wrote up his findings with the British-trained sociologist of science Steve Woolgar. Their book, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Latour and Woolgar 1979), became a classic of the new field. By observing the detailed practices of the scientists and the circulations of texts and materials, Latour and Woolgar developed what they called a constructivist account of how scientific facts were made (and sometimes unmade) in this famous immunology laboratory. The theme of the "making" or "manufacture" of knowledge was also pursued by the German-trained sociologist Karin Knorr-Cetina (1981), in her ethnography of a Californian food science laboratory. Knorr-Cetina put to great effect her detailed access to laboratory notebooks and lab practices (her informant husband worked at the lab) as she followed how scientific findings were transformed into the written medium. At the same time, Sharon Traweek (1988), who was trained as an anthropologist, was embarking on her study of the Stanford Linear Accelerator (SLAC). Traweek's ethnography (also depends on husband informants) was not published until nearly a decade

later and was remarkable because of its comparative nature—she compared SLAC with a Japanese lab—and because she focused on the detailed ecology of knowledge production, including the gendering of the male physicists she studied. The fourth of these ethnographically inspired studies was also being pursued in California during the same period. Working in a molecular biology laboratory at UC Irvine, Michael Lynch (1985), a student of Harold Garfinkel, paid particular close attention to the shoptalk he encountered. Fine-grained transcriptions of talk in the ethnomethodological tradition provided the raw materials for studying how scientists separated fact and artifact in the practice of preparing electron micrographs. This ethnomethodological approach was also applied to the topic of scientific discovery (Brannigan 1981; Garfinkel, Lynch, and Livingston 1981; Woolgar 1976).

These pioneering laboratory studies established the genre and revealed the power of ethnographic methods. By just hanging out with scientists and watching and participating in scientific work and recording fine-grained details of lab practices, numerous scholars have been able to develop new insights into science as a social activity. Much of this work has been carried out under the *constructivist* nomenclature. The usual meaning of *construction* in this field is that of humans artfully constructing their world—a world in the making rather than the discovery of an already built world. This world of science is built or constructed actively by scientists in their local day-to-day activities from the linguistic, material, and social resources available. Although this form of *constructivism* is descended from Berger and Luckmann's (1967) "social constructivist" perspective, it has evolved its own meaning (Hacking 1999; Sismondo 1993). Latour and Woolgar's (1986) second edition of *Laboratory Life* deliberately eschewed the term *social construction* of scientific facts, replacing *social construction* with *construction*. For Latour and Woolgar, *social construction* signaled giving priority to an underlying social explanation, and, as we shall see, this is something that Latour in particular has rejected.

The three streams of work described in the foregoing, Strong Programme, EPOR, and lab studies, capture much of the most influential early work, but as with any attempt to classify a fast-evolving field, it misses a whole range of countercutting influences, approaches, and bodies of individual scholarship. Part of the problem here is the very success of SSK. Its influence has been felt particularly in the nearby fields of history and philosophy of science, where several notable scholars and their students have carried out studies that touch on, use, and affect SSK. Within anthropology too, the field has garnered much attention, and now the anthropology of science is well-established as a subdiscipline.

Worthy of special mention are influential sociological approaches that do not neatly fall into the categorization described. The "social worlds" approach, originally developed by Anselm Strauss and his students and tied back to

the Chicago interactionist interest in the sociology of work, has generated a rich vein of studies in the area of science (and technology). Susan Leigh Star has developed the well-known idea of a “boundary object,” which is a shared document or artifact that travels between different social worlds and is given different interpretations (Star and Griesemer 1989). Star and Bowker (1999) have drawn attention to how scientific infrastructure is built through such activities as routine classification. Joan Fujimura (1996), with her notion of how assemblages of tools and methods are bundled together, has also shown the power of focusing on routine work practices and the materials and tools that support them (Clarke and Fujimura 1992). Another strand has come from Thomas Gieryn, a former student of Robert Merton, who became an early advocate of SSK. Gieryn (1983) developed the important idea of “boundary work” to show the sorts of rhetorical work that scientists employ to draw boundaries between different domains. He went on to use the powerful metaphor of cultural cartography to establish how the cultural boundaries of science are drawn and redrawn (Gieryn 1999). There have also been attempts by social theorists such as Fuchs (1992) to integrate the mainly micro focus of SSK with the concerns of more mainstream sociology.

The extension of the field into medicine has also been a notable success, with the work of Evelleen Richards (1991) on vitamin C and alternative cures for cancer, Stefan Hirschauer (1991) on surgery, Nelly Oudshoorn (1994) on hormones, Stephen Epstein (1996) on AIDS activism, Marc Berg (1997) on medical informatics, Stefan Timmermans (1999) on CPR, Adele Clark (1998) on women’s health and reproduction, Annemarie Mol (2002) on atherosclerosis, Joseph Dumit (2004) on brain scanning, Peter Keating and Alberto Cambrosio (2004) on medical platforms, and Charis Thompson (2005) on in vitro fertilization. Indeed, the work on medicine with its analytical lens often focused on mundane practices built around the care of the body, has brought the field much more toward a focus on ontology than the earlier interest in SSK on epistemology.

One important cross-cutting influence has been feminist work on science. Although early SSK has rightly been criticized for having a “blind spot” (Delamont 1987) about gender, work on feminist epistemology by Sandra Harding (1986) and Helen Longino (1990) and the influential studies of Donna Haraway (1989, 1991, 1997), Evelyn Fox Keller (1983), and Londa Schiebinger (1989) have had an impact. Certainly, in that SSK examines how social factors play a role in science, it would seem obvious that gender, race, and class can and should be included in the analysis. The feminist work, with its variety of epistemological standpoints, has not always been easy to integrate with SSK (Richards and Schuster 1989), but gender is no longer a blind spot. Work on medicine and issues around biology and reproduction in particular is today unthinkable without paying consideration to issues of gender. Indeed, when it comes to the sociology of technology (see following), one

finds that feminists’ concerns with, for instance, users have become a focal point of the field.

## RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH SITES IN SSK

The focus on the very content of science—the study of scientific knowledge and practices—has been best pursued with qualitative methods such as ethnography, participant observation, in-depth interviewing (semistructured and unstructured), textual analysis, semiotics, conversation analysis, and video research. The standard sociological tool of survey research has been used little.

Just as the field has evolved new methods, it has also radically reconceptualized the sorts of social locations studied. The older sociological concepts for identifying social groups in science such as “invisible colleges,” “schools,” “disciplines,” and “co-citation networks” tend to emphasize pure social relations at the expense of material and cognitive ties (Pinch [1982] 1997). Kuhn’s term *paradigm*, although providing a welcome means of welding together practices, theories, and communities, has proved hard to operationalize. Researchers have tended to emphasize particular strategic research sites where they may gain access to what they take to be the key processes and practices of knowledge construction.

Lab studies, with their focus on mundane activity, the practices built around inscription devices for rendering the material world into a graphical form, and the transformations that texts and statements undergo, are one such site. They have enabled researchers to develop a rich understanding of particular aspects such as the role of instrumentation (Latour and Woolgar 1979; Lynch 1990) and visualization (Lynch and Woolgar 1990) and routine craft practices (Collins 1974; Jordan and Lynch 1992). Lab studies are constantly being renewed. New facets studied include the role of dirt (Mody 2001), and new theoretical approaches are emerging, such as the study of how race and gender are inscribed in labs (Helmreich 1998) and a recent turn to performativity (Doing 2004). Knorr-Cetina (1999) has completed the first comparative lab ethnography across disciplines, comparing labs in physics with those in molecular biology.

Another important research site has been the scientific controversy—contestation in general means that what is taken for granted becomes explicit. This type of controversy analysis carried out largely within the confines of science differs from the earlier focus of Nelkin (1979) and others on controversies around the social impact of science and technology (Pinch 2002). Collins (1981a) termed the scientists who contribute to a scientific controversy the *core set*. The process of consensus formation among the core set is a way of following how interpretative flexibility changes to closure in science (Collins 1981b; Pinch 1986; Simon 2002). The work on experimental controversy has garnered important notions like the “experimenter’s

regress” (Collins [1985] 1992) and has recently been extended to controversies among theoreticians (Kennefick 2000). One offshoot of this work is renewed attention to the details of experimental practices and technological testing as the minutiae get reexamined during the course of experimental disputes (Gooding, Pinch, and Schaffer 1989; MacKenzie 1989; Pinch 1993; Sims 1999). The study of fringe science controversies has also been important in the formation of SSK (Wallis 1979).

A third research site has been to examine how scientific knowledge intersects with other institutions such as the law, regulatory regimes, and politics. Brian Wynne (1988), Sheila Jasanoff (1990), David Mercer (Edmond and Mercer 2000), and Michael Lynch (Lynch and Bogen 1996) have carried out case studies informed by SSK that seek to examine the dynamics of authority and contestation over technical knowledge in different regulatory and legal forums. How particular technical practices such as DNA typing (Lynch and McNally 2003) and fingerprinting (Cole 2001) are stabilized and destabilized in legal contexts has been examined. How science and technology intersect with political formations is a vast area of inquiry. Again, it is SSK’s particular strength to focus on how particular bodies of technical practice or technical forums get constructed in a political context that informs the analysis (Gottweis 1998; Hilgartner 2000). The more theoretically ambitious work seeks to explain how technical entities and political entities are coconstructed or coproduced (Jasanoff 2004).

A fourth research site takes the extension of technical knowledge to lay people as its theme. This work touches on the “public understanding of science” (Collins and Pinch 1993; Hilgartner 1990; Lewenstein 1995; Irwin and Wynne 1996). It also examines how and under what circumstances lay groups can acquire and contest technical expertise (Collins and Pinch 2005; Epstein 1996; Rabeharisoa and Callon 1998; Wynne 1989) and how social movements can employ this technical expertise (Parthasarathy 2005).

Another recent research site that has taken on some salience is the examination of particular techniques or lab systems that become standard throughout the sciences. Historian Robert Kohler (1994) has studied the fruit fly, *Drosophila*, showing how this organism became indispensable for the science of genetics. Similar work has been carried out on the laboratory mouse by Karen Rader (2004). Anthropologist Paul Rabinow (1996) has studied how the technique of PCR (polymerase chain reaction), which enables geneticists to identify and copy gene sequences, came into being and has transformed the biotech industry. Also of great interest has been the spaces between institutions, fields, and disciplines where interaction occurs but where different epistemologies, approaches, and regimes of instrumentation operate. Standardization in such sites is always an ongoing process of negotiation, what Peter Galison (1997) has termed *trading zones*.

What these studies show is how matters to do with the social (and the political) are entwined everywhere both within the day-to-day practices of science and in other contexts where scientific and technical expertise may prevail. By pointing to the similarities in such activities as doing a routine piece of electron micrography, getting an experiment to run, trading data, preparing a laboratory mouse, or preparing a legal brief on a technical matter, the constructivist sociology of science offers a profound challenge to our picture of science as being in essence an activity where the rules and practices are highly formalized and explicit. What emerges is an image of a messy contingent heterogeneous activity much like that found among other expert communities.

Many of the early studies in the sociology of scientific knowledge took physics (e.g., Collins 1974, [1985] 1992; Pickering 1984; Pinch 1986) or mathematics (Bloor 1976; MacKenzie 1981a) as their focus. It was thought important to address the “hard case” argument—that the social explanation was most compelling when directed at the more prestigious “hard sciences.” Researchers, however, soon moved on to include many diverse sciences within their purview, such as biology (Latour 1988; Latour and Woolgar 1979; Lynch 1985), geology (Rudwick 1985), meteorology (Friedman 1989), food science (Knorr-Cetina 1981), fringe sciences (Collins and Pinch 1982; Wallis 1979), and eventually the social sciences, including economics and most recently financial markets (Ashmore, Mulkay, and Pinch 1989; Callon 1998; Knorr-Cetina and Preda 2004; MacKenzie 2003). Interestingly, at the start of the new millennium, with the rise of the new genetics, and biology arguably replacing physics as the most prestigious science, many more studies are now directed at aspects of biology.

## THE NONHUMANS

It is the extent of the entwining of the social with the material and how analytically to deal with nonhumans that has provoked some of the sharpest debates within the field. In an important series of papers and books, the French scholars Michel Callon (1986) and Bruno Latour (1987), along with the British sociologist of science John Law (1987), have combined elements of SSK with semiotics to develop a novel and extremely influential theory of how science and technology develop, known as the actor network theory (ANT) (Callon, Law, and Rip 1986; Latour 2005). This approach, which they call a “sociology of association,” entreats scholars to “follow the actors” and conceives of science made from extensive assemblages of humans and nonhumans. One early move made in this work was to extend Bloor’s principle of symmetry to encompass humans and nonhumans. In a well-known paper (Callon 1986) on the failure of a new system for harvesting scallops in St Brieuc Bay, Brittany, it appears that the nonhuman actors, the scallops, figure in as prominent a way as the human actors, the fisherman. This leveling of

the playing field of “actants” has generated enormous debate (Bloor 1999; Callon and Latour 1992; Collins and Yearley 1992; Latour 1999), partly because the methods evolved in SSK have largely been fine-tuned to studying humans—it is not clear what it even means to follow around, say, an electron. Furthermore, to treat nonhumans and humans within the same analytical vocabulary means jettisoning much standard sociology—for instance, it is difficult to talk about the socialization of an electron. The goal of ANT is, however, to do precisely this—to go beyond conventional sociology.

One thing at stake here is the status of social explanation. For many scholars, the goal of SSK is to offer ultimately a social explanation of the development of scientific knowledge or practices (Pickering 1992). The feasibility of this goal, however, has come under repeated attack and is the topic of long-running skirmishes throughout the history of SSK. Early on, a debate broke out over interest explanations as advocated by Barnes (1977) within the Strong Programme. Woolgar (1981) countered that such explanations begged the question because imputation of interests was something that scientists themselves routinely did (Barnes 1981; MacKenzie 1981b). The program of discourse analysis of science originally advocated by Mulkay, Potter, and Yearley (1983) challenged traditional SSK by accusing it of basing social explanations of interest and motivation on the selective use of discourse provided by the actors under study (Shapin 1984). Ethnomethodologists in turn questioned the warrant of social explanations to claim any special privilege—for ethnomethodologists they were merely one of many folk means of accounting for things (Lynch 1993).

This debate came to a head with Latour’s (1993) interpretation of Shapin and Schaffer’s aforementioned study. Latour argued that rather than seventeenth-century politics and society having influenced facts about air pumps, as Shapin and Schaffer maintained, both facts and society were coproduced. In other words, new facts about the world and a new society come into existence together, and so it begs the question to use society as the *explanans* for science, the *explanandum*.

The challenge to sociology posed by the sociology of science is that everywhere nature and the social are entwined. In general, social control in science is not a simple straightforward matter. If it were, then the high priests of science could simply fix-up their picture of the world and keep themselves in power in perpetuity. Heterogeneity is very much in evidence. Fine and subtle webs of commitments and investments are entangled with resources such as expertise, funding, and instrumentation. Everything is “mangled” (Pickering 1995), hybridity and impurity are everywhere (Latour 1993), and this is a challenge to the realm of pure social things with which sociologists usually work. If the formidable social network approaches developed within conventional sociology are to be applied to the sociology of science, they somehow need to include these material nonhuman elements.

## THE SOCIOLOGY OF TECHNOLOGY

The area where materiality and the nonhuman pose the most acute challenge is the sociology of technology. Within sociology, the systematic analysis of technology has been slow to develop. There was an important earlier tradition of work associated with William Ogburn (1950) and the notion of “cultural lag”—the idea that different societies take time to adapt different technologies. Of course, major social theorists, such as Karl Marx, have pointed to the importance of technology, but within the Marxist approach, machines have often been granted a deterministic role (MacKenzie 1996). Thus, all too often within the deskilling debate initiated by Harry Braverman (1975), it is assumed that machines have fixed capabilities and are not treated in terms of the social context of use (but see Noble 1984). There are also important social theorists who claim that certain features of technology or types of technology demand new sorts of social arrangements, whether Ulrich Beck’s (1992) risk society or Manuel Castells’s (2000) network society. But what is missing from this work is an analysis of how technology itself could be analyzed from the perspective of sociology.

The neglect of technology probably stems from it being thought of as merely an issue of the application of science rather than as a thing in its own right, with its own set of social and cultural practices and contexts. In the 1980s, a new sociology of technology, heavily influenced by phenomenology and in particular by SSK, emerged (Bijker, Hughes, and Pinch 1987; Latour 1987; MacKenzie and Wajcman [1985] 1999; Pinch and Bijker [1984] 1987; Woolgar 1985).

The crucial move in the new sociology of technology is the attempt to uncover and analyze the choices embedded within technologies and technological regimes and show how these choices are tied to wider societal concerns. One obvious means of doing this and “opening the black box of technology” is through the use of history. Historical analysis shows that things have not always been as they are today and thus exposes the potential for showing how things could be and were different. In terms of the analysis of institutions, Foucault’s (1977) work is particularly instructive. His focus was mainly on what he called “technologies of the self,” but his examination of specific disciplining institutions such as prisons drew attention to their material dimensions. The panopticon is well-known, but the separate system of prison care initiated by reformers such as Jeremy Bentham (Ignatieff 1978) included many new technical devices such as the architecture of rooms to avoid prisoners seeing each other; new forms of individualized tread mills; and new kinds of signaling devices for corralling prisoners. Foucault’s broad-brush technique did not examine these technical artifacts in detail, but such “total institutions” clearly depend on material arrangements and technical devices.

It is the investigation of particular technical devices that is so crucial yet hard to do because such devices often fall

within the purview of engineering and design. In short, to fully engage with the working of a technology, as with the case of science, the sociologist must acquire a great deal of engineering knowledge and learn about engineering practice.

Already, the parallels between SSK and the new sociology of technology are obvious. Indeed, many of the same scholars who earlier developed SSK (e.g., Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, Steve Woolgar, John Law, Donald MacKenzie, and Trevor Pinch) turned their attention to technology. Much of the early work was aimed at countering a simple technological determinist view of technology (Smith and Marx 1994). One influential approach, known as SCOT (social construction of technology), builds directly on Collins's EPOR program. Similar work is carried out within what has become known as the *social shaping of technology approach* (MacKenzie and Wajcman [1985] 1999). Pinch and Bijker ([1984] 1987), with their now classic SCOT study of the development of the safety bicycle, argued that the "interpretative flexibility" of the Victorian high-wheeler bicycles that preceded the safety bike could be shown by identifying different social groups who held different meanings of the technology. For one social group—elderly men and women—the *high-wheeler* had the meaning of "the unsafe bike," but for another social group, "young men of means and verve," who like to show off to their lady friends and ride the high-wheeler for sport in parks, the bike took on the meaning of "the macho bike." By identifying particular closure mechanisms around this technology, they show how one meaning and safety bike were constructed. Bijker (1995a), with his comparative case studies, of electric bulbs, bakelite, and bikes, went on to refine the SCOT approach, introducing the notion of "technological frames" as an idea akin to Kuhn's term *paradigm*. A technological frame involves a shared set of meaning and practices across a range of social groups. Kline and Pinch (1996) further elaborated SCOT in a case study of the use of the car in the rural United States. They showed that users came up with new meanings of the car as a stationary power source and explored the gendered relationship built around this use of the technology. There is no doubt that the SCOT approach has been enormously influential, with numerous studies carried out using its basic framework (Bijker 1995b; Pinch 1996), and that it is still evolving (Pinch and Trocco 2002).

Technologies are part of systems as the historian Thomas Hughes (1984) has powerfully argued. The technical, social, political, and economic become integrated within a system as it grows and matures. Standardization becomes an important topic of study as technologies and technological systems become more and more pervasive (Alder 1997; O'Connell 1993; Schaffer 1992).

ANT has also offered an important set of new analytical tools for studying the interconnected network aspect of technology. Latour's (1987) book *Science in Action* was replete with examples of technologies such as diesel engines and computers. The vocabulary of ANT defined the

object of interest as *technoscience*—a term meant to capture the intermingling and crossings of modern science with technology whereby a new development in science such as DNA could quickly become part of standardized black-boxed technologies within molecular biology such as PCR. Indeed, when it comes to studying a modern science such as biotechnology, which is pursued both in start-up biotech companies and university laboratories, it is not clear that any distinction between science and technology can be maintained. This heterogeneity is nicely captured by Law's (1987) observation that in building technologies actors engage in "heterogeneous engineering."

Latour, as well as carrying out a detailed study of a French subway system (Latour 1996), has imaginatively applied his thinking to a series of mundane artifacts, such as door stoppers and speed bumps (Latour 1993, 1994) and a special apartment key used in Berlin known as the Berlin Key (Latour 2000). The thrust of these examples is to show why nonhumans should be taken seriously (Latour 2005). For example, the speed bump is a more effective way of slowing down cars than traditional traffic warning signs—it appears as if nonhumans (the speed bumps) have been delegated some of the powers that in the world of signs rested on human processes of signification. This delegation between humans and nonhumans and how it has changed is something that traditional social theory, dealing only with a pure social realm, has found hard to accommodate (Latour 1996). Madeline Akrich (1992) has introduced the important idea of a "script." Akrich argues that technologies have scripted uses built into them—for example, an elevator has a script that users will enter the doors and operate the buttons in a certain way. The complicated choreography between user and elevator is in effect scripted into its design. Users can bite back and respond to these scripts—what Latour (1992) and Akrich refer to as antiprograms—and try and circumvent their scripted use, such as when an elevator rider pushes the emergency stop button to override someone else's floor selection. As with SCOT, ANT provides a vocabulary for analyzing technology, and numerous case studies have drawn on this approach.

The attention given to the use of technology is something that in the move from the sociology of science to the sociology of technology has become increasingly important (Oudshoorn and Pinch 2003). The users of science are often other scientists, but with technology, particular consumer technologies, users are much more heterogeneous. One important early study on users was Woolgar's (1991) work on how computer designers "configure" their users. This notion of configuration has recently been widened to include other key players in the marketing and manufacture of technologies (Mackay et al. 2000). The move toward users is where the sociology of technology interacts most with standard work in the sociology of consumption. Approaches toward the "domestication" of technologies and how technologies are culturally appropriated in new contexts of use are highly relevant (Lie and Sorenson

1996; Mansell and Silverstone 1996; Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). As well as users, attention is increasingly turning to intermediaries as scholars increasingly see the need to study production and consumption within one analytical framework (Oldenzeil, de la Bruhez, and de Witt 2005).

Feminist work on technology has always paid close attention to users as with Ruth Schwartz Cowan's (1983) classic studies of domestic technologies. Thus, for example, Cynthia Cockburn and Susan Ormrod's (1993) study of the microwave oven pays particular attention to how the microwave is tested, marketed, sold, and used. There is now an impressive corpus of studies carried out by feminists and others of how technologies are used and gendered in a variety of contexts (e.g., Lie and Sorenson 1996; Wajeman 1991). This work is also important because it explores how the gendered identities of users are coconstructed with the technologies. This gendering begins in early childhood and has all sorts of implications for male-dominated technology areas such as tinkering, hacking, computing, video games, and military technologies (Oldenzeil 1999). The masculine aspects of engineering were explored early on by Sally Hacker (1989), and understanding the gendering of engineering continues to be an important research focus (Faulkner 2000). The feminist concern with reproductive technologies as part of a more direct political intervention has led to very detailed analyses of particular reproductive technologies (e.g., Clarke 1998; Oudshoorn 1994, 2003). The technologies of *in vitro* fertilization provide another important entry point for nuanced analyses of how this technology constructs particular conceptions of sexuality, parenthood, and families (Thompson 2005).

Most of the detailed studies in the new sociology of technology have blended sociological with historical methods. A good example is Donald MacKenzie's (1990) well-known study of the evolution of ballistic missile guidance systems. MacKenzie interviewed nearly all the actors who developed this technology and carried out some archival research. His analysis goes to the core of the technical working of missile guidance, showing how the testing of missiles could be contested by the manned-bomber lobby within the American military. This work is, however, not without general application beyond this one case. For example, he develops the *trough of uncertainty* idea—the notion that those actors (typically bench engineers) nearest a technology will have greatest awareness of its uncertainties, while more distal actors who often hold organizational clout will typically see the technology as being more certain, and those even more distal—typically critics outside the organization—will again regard the technology as being shrouded in uncertainty. How different actors construct risk and uncertainty is a key finding of the new sociology of technology.

Again, it is hard to discuss the sociology of technology without referring to neighboring disciplines, which have helped shape the field and where the sociology of

technology has also had much impact. Donna Haraway's ([1985] 1991) manifesto on cyborgs has been enormously influential, generating discussion from science fiction to philosophy (Downey and Dumit 1997), although she is not formally a sociologist. Also, philosopher Langdon Winner's (1986) well-known essay "Do Artifacts Have Politics" is a staple of the field (Joerges 1999; Woolgar and Cooper 1999). Some of the most influential work has been on aspects of computing technologies (Collins 1993; Forsythe 2001). Lucy Suchman's (1987) pioneering ethnographic studies of the use of a Xerox copying machine have been taken up in the field of artificial intelligence and human-computer interaction. Paul Edwards's (1996) study of the history of computing, Garry Downey's (1998) anthropological study of the application of computer-aided design and manufacture, and Sherry Turkle's (1984) earlier work on children's use of computers have generated much interest. Likewise, studies of work have been affected by ethnographic studies of technical work carried out by sociologists and anthropologists (Barley and Orr 1997; Lave and Wenger 1991; Orr 1996). The sociology of technology is also developing a healthy cross-fertilization with business schools (e.g., Garud and Karnoe 2001). It is obvious also that as the sociology of technology increasingly studies computer-mediated technologies (Boczkowski 2004), the law will become increasingly relevant, especially around issues concerning intellectual property rights (Lessig 2000). Lastly, the general field of the history of technology has always been a formative influence on the new sociology of technology. The influence cuts both ways, with historians carrying out important historical studies that use and bear on the sociology of technology (e.g., Alder 1997; Constant 1980; Douglas 1987; Hecht 1998; Hughes 1984; Misa 1995; Nye 1990; Thompson 2002).

The strength of the field has been its engagement with the nitty-gritty of design and engineering practice. The sort of purchase that the best of this sort of fine-grained analysis can deliver is exemplified by Diane Vaughan's (1996) work on the space shuttle. Her rich ethnographically inspired study traces the causes of the Challenger accident to deep within NASA's organizational culture. Her work received renewed attention after the Columbia accident, and she participated in and helped shape some of the substantive findings of the Presidential Commission. Not all our work will have this kind of influence, of course, but it is a salutary reminder of the power of opening the black box of technology and showing how sociology can go to the very heart of technology.

## PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Science and technology grow ever more important in modern global societies. The emergence of technoscience, the commercialization of universities and new intellectual property regimes, the growing role played by information technology and biotechnology, and the promise of



nanotechnology means that it is not hard to find issues of technical knowledge and practices in almost any domain. Some scholars argue that we have entered or are entering a new mode of science with ever closer links between universities and industrial concerns (Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons 2001). The growing involvement of science with powerful institutions such as the law, the state, the military, multinational corporations, and the media needs sustained and critical analysis. Concern with the environment (Latour 2004; Yearley 1991), whether global warming or genetically modified organisms, the problems presented by indigenous knowledge and ethno-pharmaceuticals, the problems of development, and global health scares in a

world where terrorism can take the form of bioterrorism are pressing. The basic insights of science studies now turn up in all sorts of unlikely places from music (Bijsterveld and Pinch 2004) to financial markets (Callon 1998; Knorr-Cetina and Preda 2004; MacKenzie 2003). With more and more activist groups claiming technical expertise and the dissemination and reconfiguration of technical expertise via the Internet, matters of expertise and politics are firmly on the agenda for the twenty-first century (e.g., Collins and Evans 2002; Jasanoff 2003; Latour and Weibel 2005; Rip 2003; Wynne 1989, 1996, 2003). The question for the future is, How long can mainstream sociology afford to ignore science and technology?

## PART VI

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### MACROLEVEL ISSUES

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTER

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Disasters are dramatic events. They result in widespread physical damage, social disruption, and loss of life. While human societies have always encountered them, disasters seem to be increasing in frequency, financial costs, and complexity. With a growing number of people living in hazardous places and continuing advances in technology, social vulnerability to extreme events is increasing. Recent earthquakes in India, Japan, Turkey, and Iran have resulted in tens of thousands of deaths. The tsunami that devastated parts of Asia in 2004 took the lives of nearly a quarter of a million people. Hurricane Katrina, which during August 2005 struck the Gulf Coast region of the United States, left in its wake a substantial death toll, massive damage, and an enormous number of people stranded without basic life necessities. Technological disasters, such as the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the Union Carbide chemical release in Bhopal, and the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown, have taken numerous lives and caused immeasurable harm to communities, including chronic health problems for those affected, severe economic disruption, potentially irreversible damage to the environment, and declining public trust in governmental and corporate institutions. In the United States, the 1995 bombing of the Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City and the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York revealed the destructive potential of terrorism.

As these examples suggest, disasters are social events. They result from human settlement patterns, political processes, and technological failures. Their impacts are not randomly distributed but instead patterned along race, class, and gender lines. Natural disasters, then, will continue to occur as long as people live along coast lines,

earthquake faults, and in other hazardous places. Technological disasters will likely increase as our reliance on high-risk energy production, weapons systems, and other complex processes increases. And political violence will continue to occur as inequality in the world system worsens, as power becomes increasingly concentrated, and as governments are perceived to represent the interests not of the general public but of a privileged few.

Given the social nature of disasters, various disciplines have developed subfields devoted to the study of extreme events. Geographers, for example, have examined the vulnerability of people living in hazardous places (Cutter 2001); anthropologists have studied the impacts of disasters on cultural life (Oliver-Smith 1996); political scientists have assessed the administrative challenges brought on by disasters (Sylves and Waugh 1996); and economists have attempted to estimate the financial impacts of large-scale crises (Dacy and Kunreuther 1969). However, because disasters are logical byproducts of human societies, the discipline of sociology has played a prominent role in studying them, providing essential conceptual and methodological tools for understanding their causes and consequences (Quarantelli 1994).

Since its inception in the nineteenth century, sociology has been concerned with the impacts of dramatic events on societies. The discipline emerged in an effort to make sense of the political, economic, and intellectual revolutions of the late eighteenth century (Turner, Beeghley, and Powers 1995). Key sociological thinkers, including Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber, sought to understand the changing nature of social order brought on by industrial capitalism (Giddens 1971). In a more

contemporary context C. Wright Mills (1959) argued that sociologists should focus on public issues—namely, those problems confronted by society that transcend individuals and require collective solutions. And at the microlevel of analysis, sociologists have been interested in the effects of disruptions or breaches on social order (Garfinkel 1967; Goffman 1974).

In light of this long-standing concern with dramatic and disruptive events, it would only seem logical that sociologists would study disasters. In fact, the sociology of disaster is firmly established in the discipline, with a strong theoretical foundation and an ever-expanding empirical base. This chapter, then, has three primary objectives. First, it will provide a historical overview of the field's emergence, focusing primarily on the sources of funding for the earliest sociological studies of disasters and summarizing the major findings of those studies. Second, it will discuss current research trends in the sociology of disaster that will shape the future development of the field. Finally, it will discuss the implications of sociological research for dealing with disasters of the twenty-first century.

## **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTER**

The sociology of disaster is a relatively young field. Some isolated studies were done prior to the 1950s, but systematic research did not begin until after World War II. Having learned that bombings failed to demoralize German and Japanese populations, the United States military sought to understand how its own civilian population would respond to an enemy attack (Fritz 1961). Because natural and technological disasters were thought to share common characteristics with unexpected attacks, the military began funding studies of these peacetime events in the early 1950s. Among those receiving funding during the early years were social scientists at the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center, the University of Maryland, and the University of Oklahoma. Later, a social science research group on disasters was formed at the National Academy of Sciences, and in 1963 the Disaster Research Center (DRC) was founded by sociologists at the Ohio State University (Quarantelli 1987). Although it was moved to the University of Delaware in 1985, the DRC continues to operate, and other prominent centers in which sociologists play leadership roles have been established at Texas A&M University and the University of Colorado. Researchers at these centers have published important works in recent years, including comprehensive studies of disaster preparedness and response (Tierney, Lindell, and Perry 2001), hazard mitigation (Mileti 1999), risk communication (Lindell and Perry 2004), and the national homeland security alert system (Aguirre 2004).

Over the past 50 years, sociologists have learned a great deal about disasters, and findings from their studies have been summarized at various times (Quarantelli and Dynes

1977; Kreps 1984; Drabek 1986; Tierney et al. 2001). Therefore, this chapter will present a more selective account of the field's history, highlighting three important themes. First, it will assess the influence of military funding on disaster research. Second, it will explore the key intellectual influences on the field during its formative stages. Finally, it will briefly summarize the major findings of disaster research and attempt to explain the persistence of disaster myths among policymakers, emergency management officials, and the public at large.

## **Military Influences on Disaster Research**

For decades, some sociologists have raised serious concerns about military funding of research. C. Wright Mills (1956), for example, argued that the military is a core member of a group of institutional elites that have usurped power and subverted the democratic process. He cautioned that sociologists would become beholden to those who funded their research, including the military, and that the discipline would lose its ability to reform society. According to Mills (1959),

Sociology has lost its reforming push; its tendencies toward fragmentary problems and scattered causation have been conservatively turned to the use of corporation, army, and state. As such bureaucracies have become more dominant in the economic, the political, the military orders, the meaning of "practical" has shifted: that which is thought to serve the purposes, of these great institutions is held to be "practical." (P. 92)

Irving Louis Horowitz (1977) raised similar concerns:

Many other distinguished Americans are disturbed by the growing number of alliances between the military and the university. The Department of Defense (DoD) is the most sought after and frequently found sponsor of social-science research. And the DoD is sought and found by the social scientists, not, as is often imagined, the other way around. . . . As bees flock to honey, men flock to money. (Pp. 258–259)

Martin Nicolaus (1971) hammered the point home, suggesting that "with a few exceptions, chiefly among the pre-war eminences, today's prominent sociologists are the direct financial creatures, functionally the house-servants, of the civil, military, and economic sovereignty" (p. 51).

With money for early disaster studies coming primarily from the military, it is important and worthwhile to assess the impacts of that funding on the research that was done and on the subsequent development of the field. While it would be naïve to suggest that the funding source exerted no influence over the research, it would also be inaccurate to suggest that researchers became servants of the military. A more reasonable conclusion to draw would be that the military funding influenced to some extent what was studied but not what was found.

Disaster researchers in the United States have tended to study events with certain characteristics, at least in part

because of the military's concern with finding a proxy for a wartime scenario. As Barton (1969) described, disasters vary in terms of their speed of onset and their scope, magnitude, and duration of impact. Researchers in the United States have focused primarily on relatively rapid onset events with severe but geographically concentrated damage and disruption. Thus, far more research has been conducted on tornadoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes than on droughts, famines, and epidemics. Disasters also involve phases, typically identified as preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation (Drabek 1986). Preparedness refers to protective measures taken prior to a disaster by individuals, households, organizations, and communities. Response refers to the immediate postimpact period in which search and rescue and early restoration activities are undertaken. Recovery refers to the longer-term process of restoring normalcy to an affected region, and mitigation refers to community-level measures taken to prevent or lessen the impacts of future events. Researchers in the United States have conducted vast amounts of research on the preparedness and response phases, at least in part because of the military's assumption that social order would have to be imposed in the first few hours and days after impact.

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that military funding of early disaster research exerted some influence over what was studied, but it would be inappropriate to assume that the findings of the research were influenced by the military. According to Dynes (1993), the military operates under a command and control ideology, assuming that disaster victims will be helpless, antisocial behavior will prevail, and order will need to be quickly restored. Yet in a classic article reporting the results of some of the earliest disaster studies, Fritz (1961) argued that human societies are remarkably resilient when faced with disasters, not because of a strong military but because of the altruism of average people and the strength of civil society. Thus, the findings of disaster research challenged and even undermined the military's model of crisis behavior rather than affirming or validating it.

### Intellectual Influences on Disaster Research

In addition to having applied concerns stemming from the military's financial backing of their work, early disaster researchers also had important intellectual concerns. They studied natural disasters and technological crises because they believed these events provided real-world laboratories for understanding basic social processes (Fritz 1961). These sociologists grappled with the discipline's core concept—namely, social structure. They were particularly interested in describing and explaining the maintenance, transformation, and emergence of social structure under stress (Kreps 1985, 1989). Accordingly, they merged functionalism and symbolic interactionism to capture the dual realities of social stability and change in the context of disaster.

During the 1950s, when disaster research emerged, functionalism dominated sociology in the United States (Turner 1986). That approach views society as a system consisting of various parts, all of which must work in concert to ensure the successful performance and survival of the larger system. Disruptions to one part of the system, according to this model, have ripple effects throughout the system. From this perspective, disasters represent a type of disruption that has potentially debilitating effects on the social system. Reflecting this view, Fritz (1961) offered the following definition of a disaster, which guided the early studies and continues to exert influence over the field today:

An event, concentrated in time and space, in which a society, or a relatively self-sufficient subdivision of a society, undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social structure is disrupted and the fulfillment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented. (P. 655)

Clearly, on the basis of this definition, functionalism profoundly shaped the development of disaster research. If society is normally relatively stable and predictable, then disasters provide an opportunity to see how it responds when something unpredictable occurs. Conventional wisdom might predict that social order breaks down in response to such events, but sociological research suggests otherwise. Instead of falling apart, the social structure typically becomes flexible and adaptive under stress.

To explain the unplanned, spontaneous, and emergent responses to disasters they observed, early disaster researchers drew on the principles of symbolic interactionism (Nigg 1994). Functionalism provided them a model of society under normal conditions and a way for thinking about disasters as systemic disruptions, but it was symbolic interactionism that provided them the perspective they needed to understand the complex reality of disaster response. With its emphasis on symbols, meaning, and the definition of the situation, symbolic interactionism provides a more fluid and flexible view of society. In responding to disasters, human beings must define the situation as problematic, figure out who will do what in the response effort, and in many cases bypass established procedures for getting things done.

Because of the emergent nature of human response to disaster and the need for people to sometimes set aside or alter established patterns of behavior and interaction, the field of disaster research is closely linked to the study of collective behavior (Dynes and Quarantelli 1968; Wenger 1987). According to Turner and Killian (1987), both of whom have been involved in disaster research, collective behavior refers to “forms of social behavior in which usual conventions cease to guide social action and people collectively transcend, bypass, or subvert established institutional patterns and structures” (p. 3). On the basis of that definition, most human responses to disasters involve

substantial amounts of collective behavior, which is why textbooks on collective behavior typically devote one or more chapters to disasters (Miller 2000).

This discussion clearly demonstrates that disaster research is not strictly an applied field, and that it does not exist on the fringes of sociology. It is an important area of inquiry that sheds light on core concepts of the discipline, including the complementary nature of social structure and human agency. Because of the flexibility of structures and the creativity of individuals, communities are remarkably resilient when disasters strike.

### **Myths and Realities of Disaster Response**

In covering major disasters, the mass media regularly depict images of widespread panic, rampant crime, and social disorder. Law enforcement and emergency management officials make plans for dealing with all the looting they assume will occur and for housing all the evacuees they assume will seek shelter in public facilities. Mental health professionals stand ready to deliver services to all the victims and responders they believe will experience serious cases of posttraumatic stress disorder. These concerns, which may appear to be obvious and common sense, stem from erroneous assumptions about human response to disaster. Indeed, these assumptions are part of a pervasive “disaster mythology,” in which disasters are thought to bring out the worst in people (Quarantelli 1960; Fischer 1998).

In reality, research conducted by social scientists over the past several decades shows that after disasters crime rates actually go down, panic is rare or nonexistent, most victims either stay put or seek shelter with friends or family members, and disasters produce some positive mental health effects. At the individual level of analysis, panic and role abandonment—that is, emergency workers leaving their post—rarely occur (Quarantelli 1954, 2002; Johnson 1987). People with disaster-related occupational roles may experience role conflict, but Dynes’s (1987) extensive review of the literature suggests that they almost never abandon their posts during the emergency response. Rather, workers embrace their occupational roles and improvise when necessary to meet the demands of the situation (Johnston and Johnson 1988; Kreps and Bosworth 1993). Even in extreme situations, individual behavior is regulated by existing or emergent norms and social relationships.

At the organizational level of analysis, research shows that the rigid and inflexible view of bureaucracy held by Weber (1946) fails to capture the innovation that typically occurs during disasters. In responding to disasters, organizations become flexible and adaptive, changing their tasks and structures as needed. Dynes (1970) observes that various organizations, not just those with disaster responsibilities, become involved in responding to large-scale crises. He developed a typology depicting four types of responding organizations: established, expanding, extending, and

emergent. Police and fire departments, which routinely deal with emergencies and are expected to be involved in disasters, are established organizations. Organizations such as the American Red Cross or Salvation Army are expanding because they deal with routine emergencies but their size increases dramatically during a disaster. Extending organizations maintain their existing structure but take on new tasks in a disaster. For example, a construction crew might engage in debris removal or other cleanup efforts. Finally, some organizations are formed only after a disaster has occurred, such as an informal search and rescue crew.

At the broader community level of analysis, empirical research suggests that communities experience an increase in prosocial behavior. This notable increase in altruism and helping behavior has led some scholars to refer to the post-disaster environment as a “therapeutic community” (Fritz 1961). Indeed, the outpouring of support in response to large-scale disasters is often so great that the convergence of volunteers and supplies creates management difficulties. Thus, rather than producing chaos and social disorganization, disasters inspire creativity on the part of individuals, flexibility on the part of organizations, and solidarity on the part of communities.

Despite these findings, disaster myths persist in the minds of many in the general public, the media, and even the emergency management profession. In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, for example, the media reported rampant looting, violence, and lawlessness, but as time passed it became clear that those early reports were greatly exaggerated (Fischer 2005). After five decades of research drawing the same conclusion—namely, disasters do not cause massive social breakdown—how have these myths survived? There are at least three viable reasons for the persistence of disaster myths. First, Fischer (1998) suggests that the mass media plays an important role in the perpetuation of disaster myths, focusing largely on isolated incidents of antisocial behavior and ignoring more prevalent patterns of prosocial behavior in the response period. Second, Quarantelli (2002) argues that disaster myths may serve a social function in the same sense that Durkheim ([1895] 1982) suggested crime is functional for society. According to Durkheim, crime promotes rather than undermines social solidarity. Through the punishment of criminals, moral boundaries are established that strengthen in-group solidarity by labeling some people as outsiders. Quarantelli reasons that the myth of panic and social breakdown in disaster may serve a similar function, reminding people that rules and norms of civility are necessary elements of society. Finally, Tierney (2003) makes a convincing case that disaster myths have survived because certain institutional interests benefit from them. Specifically, she argues that the military defense establishment, law enforcement agencies, and the growing information technology industry all stand to profit from the widely held beliefs that civil society is vulnerable, that individuals faced with crisis are irrational and need to be

controlled, and that the most effective way to respond to a disaster is by establishing a strong hierarchy of command and control.

It is clear from this discussion that the realities and myths of human response to disaster are very different. On the one hand, the myths suggest that society breaks down and chaos prevails in the wake of disaster. On the other hand, research has shown for decades that disaster behavior is overwhelmingly prosocial, social solidarity is enhanced during the emergency response period, and societies are resilient.

Unfortunately, the persistence of the disaster myths is not a trivial or an inconsequential matter. As an example, following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center in New York, the United States government created the Department of Homeland Security. Numerous federal organizations were folded into the new agency, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is responsible for responding to major natural disasters across the nation. Critics feared that the move would undermine FEMA's autonomy and weaken its ability to respond to disasters in a timely and effective manner. Those fears proved valid in 2005, when Hurricane Katrina pounded the Gulf Coast. Residents in New Orleans were stranded on rooftops for days before the federal response reached adequate levels.

Sociologists have suggested for decades that effective disaster responses require flexibility, creativity, and decentralization. Yet the trend in the United States today is to engage in unrealistic planning, assume the need for command and control, centralize authority, and militarize emergency management. Given these policy trends and the problems they have created, disaster researchers have begun to pursue several new lines of inquiry that promise to sharpen our understanding of extreme events and, hopefully, improve our ability to respond effectively to them. The next section of this chapter discusses those new lines of research.

## CURRENT TRENDS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTER

In recent years, the sociology of disaster has undergone dramatic change. From the 1950s to the 1980s, researchers in the field did important work that has made lasting conceptual and applied contributions. They showed that, contrary to conventional wisdom, social responses to disasters are organized, not chaotic. They documented that panic, looting, and other types of antisocial behavior rarely occur. And they demonstrated that successful responses to disasters are decentralized, localized, and flexible.

However, in the 1980s some researchers in the field began to point out limitations of the research that had been done up to that point. Early research, for example, tended to focus on the positive aspects of disasters, whereas studies today are more likely to highlight the heightened

vulnerability of certain populations and the unequal distribution of impacts along race, class, and gender lines. Organizations have historically been studied because of their roles in responding to disasters; however, recent studies look at the role organizations play in creating disasters in the first place. The early work on disasters focused largely on natural disasters, and when technological disasters were studied they were assumed to be very similar to the other types of events. Contrary to this view, several researchers today argue that natural and technological disasters produce drastically different results because the latter are perceived to result from human agency. Much of the early work on disasters had a strong structural bias, examining the ways in which roles, statuses, and organizations changed under stress. But in recent years attention has increasingly been called to the cultural dimensions of disasters.

As discussed previously, early disaster research was guided primarily by a blend of functionalism and symbolic interactionism. That perspective, in combination with the applied concerns stemming from military funding, led researchers to study certain types of events and to focus on a limited range of issues. Specifically, they studied rapid onset events and focused on the maintenance and transformation of social structure in response to those events. Noticeably absent from the field for several decades, therefore, was a critical or conflict perspective (Bolin 1998).

A major change in the field of disaster research in recent years has been the introduction and expanded use of conflict and political economic approaches to studying extreme events (Tierney 1989; Stallings 2002). These approaches have strongly influenced the direction of disaster research, calling attention to various social patterns and processes that have largely been overlooked in the past. This section of the chapter will describe four important trends in recent disaster research: (1) social vulnerability analysis, (2) organizational research, (3) studies of technological disasters, and (4) research on the cultural dimensions of disasters.

### Social Vulnerability to Disasters

Disasters are not random and indiscriminate in their effects. Rather, some people are more vulnerable to them than others. Sociologists have historically examined the relationship between social stratification and people's susceptibility to crime victimization, poverty, and other social problems. Recent studies suggest that disasters, too, are social phenomena that discriminate. Those with wealth, power, and privilege are far less vulnerable to them and much more capable of rebounding than those with less social capital.

Several studies, for example, show that women are particularly vulnerable to disasters because of their disadvantaged positions in economic structures and their political marginalization (Enarson and Morrow 1998). Similarly, recent research has documented the particularly harsh

impacts of disasters on people who live in poverty (Fothergill and Peek 2004). Recent research has also shown that racial minorities, particularly African Americans, are more likely to be faced with technological hazards, and they are more likely to have difficulties recovering from disasters (Bullard 1994; Fothergill, Maestas, and Darlington 1999).

Published case studies of recent major disasters in the United States—including the 1994 Northridge earthquake (Bolin 1998), Hurricane Andrew of 1992 (Peacock, Morrow, and Gladwin 1997), and the 1995 heat wave in Chicago (Klinenberg 2002)—convincingly demonstrate that some groups are hit harder than others when disasters strike. Preliminary observations of Hurricane Katrina, which struck New Orleans in 2005, reveal this same pattern of discrimination. Those who were unable to evacuate the city, and thus most severely affected, were the poor, African Americans, and those without personal transportation.

Given the unequal and socially patterned distribution of disaster impacts, future research on vulnerability needs to pursue two related objectives. First, there is still a need for quick response research to improve the capacities of responding agencies to meet the needs of special populations in the immediate aftermath of catastrophic events. Second, research is needed to develop realistic approaches to making local communities sustainable and resilient—that is, more attention needs to be paid to mitigation to prevent disasters from occurring in the first place (Mileti 1999). In pursuing these objectives researchers will need to focus on the role of organizations, in both the public and private sectors, not only in responding to disasters but also in creating them.

## **Organizations, Risk, and Disasters**

Earlier studies of disasters focused on organizations, but they took a relatively narrow view of them—namely, as responding units. Recent studies on organizations, therefore, represent a dramatic departure from the earlier view. They recognize that organizations play a substantial role in producing disasters or exacerbating their effects. Researchers advocating a more critical stance argue that in modern society large-scale organizations define acceptable risk, shape public perceptions of those risks, and make key decisions on how those risks will be allocated and managed (Clarke 1989; Clarke and Short 1993; Tierney 1999).

Weber (1946) observed long ago the pervasive and powerful nature of bureaucracies. He also cautioned that despite their benefits bureaucracies are impersonal, dehumanizing, and difficult to change. In the tradition of Weber, many researchers today have adopted a critical stance toward organizations. Ritzer (2000), for example, argues that the “McDonaldization” of society has resulted in homogenization, mediocrity, and extensive reliance on technology. Perrow (1984) asserts that “normal accidents” have become inevitable—that is, as the complexity of our technical systems has increased, their potential for failure

has also increased. Vaughan (1999) calls attention to the “dark side of organizations” that makes mistake, misconduct, and disaster inevitable. Freudenburg (1993) argues that organizations betray public trust when they fail to responsibly define and manage risk, and Clarke (1999) suggests that organizations produce “fantasy documents” to give the public the sometimes misleading impression that things are under control.

Recent events in the United States plainly reveal the role of organizations in contributing to or exacerbating disasters. For example, according to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (2004), the events of September 11, 2001, resulted at least in part from organizational failure. Specifically, national intelligence agencies failed to communicate effectively and share information related to terrorism. Similarly, much of the suffering that occurred in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans resulted from a delayed and uncoordinated governmental response (Waugh 2005). Clearly, the causes and consequences of disasters cannot be understood apart from large-scale organizations. While these organizations often make natural disasters worse by not preparing for them or being too slow to respond, they play a particularly salient role in the production of technological crises.

## **Research on Technological Disasters**

For many years, sociologists have regarded natural and technological disasters as similar events, relying on a distinction between consensus and dissensus events (Quarantelli and Dynes 1977). On the one hand, natural and technological disasters are considered consensus events because there is general agreement that the impacts are undesirable and a response is necessary. On the other hand, wars, riots, and terrorism are considered dissensus events because they seek to create conflict and disunity. Some researchers, however, have challenged this distinction and suggest instead that natural and technological disasters are different types of events that produce significantly different impacts (Erikson 1994).

In his study of a dam break in West Virginia, for example, Erikson (1976) argues that the disaster had devastating, negative impacts on the community. Other researchers suggest that long-standing environmental contamination and other “chronic technical disasters” create stress, conflict, and inequality for local communities (Couch and Kroll-Smith 1985). And several researchers argue that technological disasters have “corrosive” rather than “therapeutic” effects on communities that experience them (Cuthbertson and Nigg 1987; Freudenburg 1997; Picou, Marshall, and Gill 2004). Still other research suggests that conflict is sometimes absent in technological disasters (Aronoff and Gunter 1992) and present in natural disasters (Stallings 1988).

The debate over the relative effects of natural and technological disasters on communities is an important one in the field of disaster research. It clearly highlights the need



for more empirical studies, but it also raises important conceptual concerns about the nature of society. While Durkheim ([1893] 1984) emphasized the need for consensus in society, Marx regarded society as the result of class struggle (Marx and Engels [1848] 1978). Mediating these views, Simmel ([1908] 1955) argued that conflict and consensus are copresent in every social group and interaction. It seems likely that disasters, whether natural or technological, involve varying degrees of both consensus and conflict. Rather than approaching these as dichotomous tendencies, perhaps instead researchers should envision a continuum along which any disaster could be placed. At one extreme, some disasters clearly generate consensus; at the other extreme, some disasters clearly result in conflict; and in between the extremes are all of those disasters that result in both consensus and conflict.

### Exploring the Cultural Dimensions of Disasters

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, disasters are dramatic social events. In thinking about them, sociologists have looked at the relationship between disasters and social structure. Early disaster researchers were interested in studying the response of social structure to extreme events. For example, they examined the ways in which organizations adapt and individuals improvise to meet heightened emergency demands. More recently, scholars have pointed out the ways in which social structure contributes to disasters. For example, they have studied the impact of social stratification on people's vulnerability to disasters. In the former case, social structure is treated as a dependent variable, and in the latter case it is treated as an independent variable. Both of these approaches, however, ignore an important element of social life: culture.

In response to the structural bias of the field, some researchers have recently called for more work to be done on the cultural dimensions of disasters (Webb, Wachtendorf, and Eyre 2000). They argue that a more complete understanding of disasters requires both structural and cultural approaches. Just as scholars in other related fields in sociology are turning to culture, disaster researchers have begun to take a similar turn. They have examined the use of humor as a coping strategy among emergency workers (Moran 1990), the varieties of graffiti that often appear in disaster-stricken communities (Hagen et al. 1999), women's quilting groups after disasters (Enarson 2000), and the perpetuation of disaster myths in movies (Mitchell et al. 2000). They have also pointed out how cultural and religious beliefs sometimes impede communities from taking proactive steps to prevent future disasters (Schmuck 2000). And they have studied the effects of disasters on collective memory and policy (Bos, Ullberg, and Hart 2005).

Disasters clearly have an important cultural component. At the most general level, they become markers of social time. People who survive them will often recall events by

drawing a line between life before the disaster and life after it. Politicians will often comment on how disasters profoundly change things. Following the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, for example, President Bush and members of his administration claimed that the disaster had changed everything. Thus, the United States adopted an unprecedented preemptive stance to justify invading Iraq in 2003. While it is important to understand the structural bases of disasters and to learn lessons on how to better prevent or respond to future events, it is equally important to study their cultural dimensions.

### FINAL COMMENTS AND PROSPECTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

This chapter reviewed the history of disaster research in sociology and discussed some important current trends in the area. In terms of the field's history, it was shown that early researchers had both applied and intellectual concerns. Because they were funded primarily by the military, early studies focused on certain types of events—namely, rapid onset events with substantial but geographically limited damage—that resembled possible war scenarios. And because of that funding a major focus of the early studies was on how to better prepare for and respond to disasters. In terms of intellectual concerns, it was shown that the pioneers in the field were interested in studying basic social processes—namely, the maintenance and transformation of social structure under stress. Given the copresence of existing and new structures in every disaster response, early researchers merged functionalism and symbolic interactionism to explain what they observed.

In terms of current trends, it was shown that disaster researchers are increasingly turning to conflict and political economy perspectives in their work. For example, they have begun to study the relationship between social stratification—including race, class, gender, and age—and people's vulnerability to extreme events. Scholars have also called attention to the ways in which complex organizations produce or exacerbate crises. Some researchers have challenged the long-standing assumption that natural and technological disasters produce similar impacts, suggesting instead that, unlike natural disasters, technological events create conflict and stress for local communities. And researchers in the area have begun to examine not just the structural but also the cultural dimensions of disasters.

Throughout the discussion of the field's history and its current trends, the centrality of disaster research to the discipline of sociology was emphasized. While scholars in the area have approached their work with an applied orientation, they have also grappled with fundamental sociological concepts. For example, researchers have documented the ways in which social roles are both played and made in response to disasters, various organizational adaptations to

stress, and the complementary nature of social structure and human agency.

While a great deal has been learned over the past five decades about the social aspects of disasters, there is still much work to be done. Crises are becoming increasingly complex, more damaging, and international in scope. As a result, some nations in the world and certain groups within those nations are more likely than others to experience devastating events. Given that much of what is known about disasters is based on experiences in the United States, research on this topic must adopt a cross-cultural perspective. And as new threats, such as global terrorism, become perceived as problematic, disaster researchers need to reflect on the boundaries of their field. Some researchers, for example, have argued that the social response to the attacks on the World Trade Center resembled what is typically seen in natural disasters (Webb 2002), but others have suggested that the longer-term impacts may be quite different (Marshall, Picou, and Gill 2003). While wars and terrorism have not historically been examined by disaster researchers, the field seems to be embracing a more inclusive view.

Certainly, all the social sciences are relevant to the study of disasters, but sociology is particularly well suited because disasters are collective events. Indeed, sociological research on disasters has produced a number of important insights that can better equip societies for coping with catastrophic events in the future. For example, sociologists have advocated an “all-hazards” approach to disaster planning. From this perspective, public officials should not overemphasize one threat, such as terrorism, at the expense of planning for other events, such as hurricanes. Research suggests that effective responses to disasters require flexibility and decentralization, not rigidity and centralization of authority. In responding to disasters public officials need to recognize that some groups—including women, minorities, children, the elderly, and those with disabilities—are more severely affected than others and have a more difficult time recovering. Finally, as we enter the twenty-first century, the most important lesson to be learned from sociological research over the past several decades is that hazard mitigation and disaster prevention must be prioritized at the international, national, and local levels.

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF MENTAL HEALTH

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This chapter describes the history, application, and development in sociology of the study of mental health, illness, and disorders. Mental health, mental illness, social and mental functioning, and its social indicators are a classic theme in the field of sociology. Émile Durkheim's (1951) *Suicide* was a landmark study in both sociology and epidemiology, laying out a sociological course of research that remains an intellectual force in contemporary social science (Berkman and Glass 2000). The influence of the sociology of mental health and illness goes well beyond its sociological roots; its major theoretical perspectives interact with major research streams in psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, public health, and medicine (Aneshensel and Phelan 1999; Horwitz and Scheid 1999; Eaton 2001; Gallagher 2002; Cockerham 2005). The sociology of mental health also connects to numerous other fields in sociology, including general medical sociology, the sociology of aging, demography and biodemography, statistics, childhood studies, sociology of the life course, deviance, criminology, stratification, and studies of the quality of life.

Mental health, mental illness, and mental disorder are closely related but distinguishable concepts. Mental health refers to a state of well-being or alternatively, a state of mental normality, free of disorder or illness. Mental illness refers to a persistent state of mental abnormality. The term *mental disorder* is applied to a specific diagnosis of mental abnormality, such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, agoraphobia, mania or substance dependence.

In this chapter, the term *sociology of mental health* is used to refer to general theories and research that encompass the causes, development, and consequences of mental

disorders and the state or symptoms of mental distress. The term also includes the study of personal and situational resources that preserve or restore the state of mental well-being. Sociologists who practice in the field of mental health examine a variety of outcomes and indicators of mental health as well as mental disorders.

The chapter is organized into three sections: (1) a brief historical perspective on the study of mental health and illness in sociology; (2) the current state of research in the field, including its major themes and methodological problems; and (3) the future directions of the field. This chapter has four pervasive themes: (1) the interaction of the sociology of mental health and disorder with psychology, psychiatry, public health, and medicine; (2) the environmental perspective, which is the major contribution of the sociology to the mix of disciplines examining mental health in society; (3) the relationship between the study of mental health and studies of mental disorder; and (4) the emergence of the life course perspective as a dominant theoretical perspective in the sociology of mental health.

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### THE SOCIOLOGY OF MENTAL HEALTH: A BRIEF HISTORY

The topic of mental health has a venerable tradition in sociology. Durkheim's classic work *Suicide* was translated into English in 1921, and it is still widely cited in the field. Durkheim's work encouraged interest in the relationship of mental health and disorders with social structure, group membership, geographical location, and other indicators of social integration and organization. One of the most famous

early applications of Durkheim's perspective was Robert Merton's (1938) work on social structure and anomie. Taken together, Durkheim and Merton introduced the influential idea that social systems can produce "stress" for individuals, who in turn may act in deviant or disordered ways (Cockerham 2005). Also applying Durkheim's ideas, Faris and Dunham (1939) conducted a study of the distribution of schizophrenia in Chicago. Observing that people with schizophrenia clustered in high poverty areas, they argued that social isolation encouraged the development of symptoms characterizing schizophrenia.

Although Merton's and Faris and Dunham's theories no longer hold sway among contemporary sociologists of mental health, they are significant in their historical impact on the field. The organized field of the sociology of mental health grew out of the larger field of general medical sociology in the late 1930s and 1940s. Interest in mental illness and its causes were heightened by extraordinary events in the mid-twentieth century. The suffering of many ordinary Americans during the Great Depression, the discovery of psychiatric impairments among many World War II draftees, and the traumatic effects of combat on soldiers and civilians were powerful arguments for government support of efforts to mitigate mental illness (Kirk 1999).

The founding of the National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH) in 1949 contributed to the development of medical sociology in general. The establishment of the Laboratory of Socio-Environmental Studies at NIMH in 1952 was a critical event in the development of studies of mental health in medical sociology. The sociologist John Clausen, who headed the laboratory, recruited and supported a number of sociologists who became leaders in the field, among them Melvin Kohn, Leonard Pearlin, Erving Goffman, and Morris Rosenberg (Kirk 1999). Using a strategy still dominant in behavioral science approaches to mental disorders, Clausen (1956) recruited social scientists from multiple disciplines as well as sociologists, stating that "the roles to be filled by sociologists within the mental health field call for collaboration with clinicians" (p. 47).

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, NIMH was a major supporter of sociological and psychological research on mental health and illness. According to figures assembled by Kirk (1999), in 1976 more than 50 percent of NIMH research grants were to social, psychological, and behavioral scientists. A smaller proportion of grants were awarded to psychiatrists and physicians (a situation that no longer holds at NIMH).

### **The Development of Social Epidemiology of Mental Health and Disorders**

Social epidemiology, sometimes labeled psychiatric epidemiology or social psychiatry (Gallagher 2002), is the discovery and documentation of the social and demographic distribution of mental disorders and health. The distribution of mental disorders can be documented via the study of medical records, mental hospital admissions, and

surveys of the general population. Surveys in representative community populations, using clinically validated questions that identify and classify mental disorder symptoms by diagnostic categories, are the current tools used to estimate the prevalence of disorders (Cockerham 2005). The diagnostic estimates are then analyzed to determine their distribution by social and demographic group.

Hollingshead and Redlich (1958) (a sociologist and a psychiatrist) conducted an innovative study of mental disorders in New Haven, Connecticut, in which they compared mental illness inpatients and outpatients to a sample representative of the general community. Although not a study of prevalence the study had wide influence because of their findings that different types of mental disorder were distributed by social class, with more disorders among lower social class groups. The study also found that treatment for mental disorder varied by class. Because Hollingshead and Redlich's study included only treated cases, however, they could not draw inferences about possible social causes of mental disorders.

The Midtown Manhattan Study in the 1950s (Srole et al. 1962) investigated the distribution of mental disorders using a random selection household survey design. The interview responses were rated by psychiatrists on the team. The findings from this study continue to shape social epidemiology today. Mental disorders were found to be more prevalent among respondents of lower socioeconomic status. Childhood poverty was linked to psychiatric impairment in adulthood (an early application of the life course perspective on mental health). Those who had mental disorders were less likely to be upwardly mobile. The investigators hypothesized that exposure to childhood and adult stressors played a key role in the distribution of mental disorders as well as mental health (Cockerham 2005). Many of these findings were replicated in a study of Nova Scotia communities (Leighton et al. 1963).

The environmental perspective on mental health was also advanced by studies led by social psychologists. *Americans View Their Mental Health*, two nationally representative interview studies conducted in 1956 and 1976 (Veroff, Douvan, and Kulka 1981), examined patterns over time in the contributions of the social environment to both positive and negative mental well-being as well as to patterns of help seeking for those who experienced mental distress.

A notable advance in the survey technology for measuring the prevalence of mental disorders and their social correlates was the Epidemiological Catchment Area (ECA) project, conducted by NIMH and five universities in the 1980s (Yale University, Johns Hopkins University, Washington University, Duke University, and the University of California at Los Angeles). A multidisciplinary team, including sociologists, psychiatrists, and psychologists developed new diagnosis instruments to detect mental disorders for use in the general population (Robins and Regier 1991). These diagnostic instruments, derived from the third version of the *Diagnostic and Statistical*

*Manual of the American Psychiatric Association (DSM-III)*, were coupled with interviews that measured environmental factors, social class, race, ethnicity, stressors, social relationships, and other factors believed to correlate with the risk of developing mental disorders.

The separate samples for the ECA studies, however, were not representative of the entire population of the United States. In 1990 through 1992, NIMH funded the first national survey of mental disorders in the general U.S. population ( $n = 8,068$ ), the National Comorbidity Survey (NCS; Kessler and Zhao 1999). The investigators updated the interview diagnostic measures to reflect those recently developed by the American Psychiatric Association and the World Health Organization (Kessler et al. 1994). Along with diagnostic measures of depression, mania, anxiety, substance abuse, phobias, posttraumatic stress disorder, and other mood and psychotic disorders, the NCS interviews included measures of environmental factors, personality, childhood conditions, physical health, and mental health care utilization. NCS investigated the concept of *comorbidity*, which is defined as the occurrence of more than one type of mental disorder in an individual.

The NCS has been widely emulated and expanded. A version of the NCS was also conducted in Canada. NIMH also funded a series of replications of the NCS in 2000 to 2003 (Kessler et al. 2005), and the method has been extended to studying mental health and illness in children. The World Health Association is currently coordinating international replications of the NCS ([www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs](http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs)).

## THE STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGY

As the foregoing brief historical overview shows, the study of mental health in sociology has been influenced by multiple disciplines. It is also host to a number of competing theoretical perspectives. The most widely discussed is the tension among *medical*, *environmental*, and *societal reaction* perspectives on the causes, consequences, and appropriate treatment of mental disorders. As a consequence of the host of influences on the field, there is considerable disagreement over the measurement of basic concepts in research, including how to define mental health and disorders (Kessler and Zhao 1999), environmental factors such as stressors, location, and socioeconomic status (Wheaton 1999); and social consequences such as disability, labeling, and social isolation (Horwitz and Scheid 1999; Pillemer et al. 2000). In addition, there is considerable creative tension between those who concentrate on establishing the incidence and prevalence of mental disorders and those who focus more on the correlates of mental health and mental illness (Mirowsky and Ross 2002, 2004). Finally, there is considerable research on the use of mental health services and on mental health policy.

## The Influence of Other Disciplines on the Sociology of Mental Health

As Clausen (1956) prophetically foresaw, sociologists who specialize in mental health frequently collaborate with those in other disciplines, such as developmental and social psychology, psychiatry, epidemiology, economics (Aneshensel and Phelan 1999; Gallagher 2002), and increasingly biology (Shanahan and Hofer 2005). The National Institutes of Health has encouraged and continues to encourage multidisciplinary approaches to the study of mental illness and disorders. Psychiatrists and clinical psychologists lay claim to the definitions of mental illness and disorder through the continuing revisions of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Mental Disorders*, currently in its fourth edition (American Psychiatric Association 2000), as well as to measurements of mental distress (Radloff 1977), quality of life (Veroff et al. 1981), and social relationships and support (Cohen, Underwood, and Gottlieb 2000). Sociologists who study mental health compete for federal funds and intellectual prestige with those from other disciplines.

The presence of sociologists in interdisciplinary efforts to understand the causes, course, and consequences of mental illness and disorders is a positive situation; the influence of the sociology of mental health on other disciplines is tangible. A negative aspect of the interdisciplinary effort is that the sociology of mental health is sometimes viewed as isolated from the general field of sociology (Aneshensel and Phelan 1999). This perception may be exacerbated by the employment of sociologists of mental health (and other medical sociologists) in academic units other than Sociology departments. Members of the Sociology of Mental Health section of the American Sociological Association are employed in medical schools, schools of public health, schools of social work, and departments of human development. When theories of cause and measures of critical outcomes are shared with other disciplines, the question arises: What is the unique contribution of sociology to the study of mental health and illness? The answer to this question is pressing as there are calls for proposals that contribute to “the development, enhancement, and assembly of new data sets from existing data” and for research “that combines diverse levels of analysis” from national research and review bodies (National Institutes of Health 2004) as well as for research that examines the causes of health differences by socioeconomic status and behavioral risk factors across the life course (National Research Council 2004).

## Theoretical Perspectives on Mental Health and Disorder in Sociology

Five major perspectives, and combinations of these perspectives, are used in the contemporary sociology of mental health. The five major perspectives are (1) the *medical model*, (2) the *environmental perspective*, (3) the *social*

*psychological perspective*, (4) *societal reaction* (or labeling), and (5) the *life course perspective*. The medical model views mental disorders as diseases and prescribes medical treatment as the appropriate cure. The environmental perspective asserts that factors such as social class, race, ethnicity, gender, urban location, and exposure to stressors may cause and most certainly shape risks for mental disorder. The social psychological perspective contributes insight into the social and relational factors that provide resources for adjusting to environmental stressors and restoring mental health and well-being. The social reaction perspective argues that mental illness emerges from social strain processes that produce deviance. The life course perspective views mental health and mental disorder as resulting from the accumulation of environmental stressors and exposures across the lifetime, in interaction with developmental and personal factors such as family structure, personality, and even genetic endowment. Researchers in the sociology of mental health often combine one or more of these perspectives in their research, with the life course perspective now generally seen as an emerging unifying paradigm (George 1999).

### Defining a Unique Sociological Approach to Mental Health and Illness

Although there is constant interaction between the mental health disciplines, several recent analyses of the state of theory in the sociology of mental health in the late twentieth century indicate the emergence of a distinct sociological approach. Horwitz and Scheid (1999) outlined two major approaches in the study of the sociology of mental health and illness. These two approaches are: (1) the social contexts producing or shaping mental health and disorder and (2) the recognition, treatment, and policy response to mental illness and disorder. In the same volume, Thoits (1999) described three major approaches that uniquely characterize the sociology of mental health: (1) stress exposure (a subset of the social context approach described by Horwitz and Scheid); (2) structural strain theory, which derives from Merton (1938); and (3) societal reaction, or labeling theory. Aneshensel and Phelan (1999) argue that the distinguishing issue in the sociological approach to mental illness is attention to how social stratification produces the unequal distribution of both disorders and mental health.

Aneshensel and Phelan also argue that a major challenge to the sociological approach to mental disorders is the debate between social causation and social selection explanations for the relationship between mental disorders and social class. The social selection approach hypothesizes that the reason there are more mental disorders in the lower economic class is because those with mental disorders are downwardly mobile economically or are unable to be upwardly mobile. This debate has many implications for interpreting how social stratification is linked to mental disorders and health (e.g., Miech et al. 1999).

The sociological approach also provides unique insight into the serious social consequences for those who have mental disorders, including socioeconomic success. The sociological approach also contributes research on the social factors that influence how institutions and individuals recognize when someone is mentally ill, how individuals are treated and how that treatment varies by social class, gender, and race, and who is more likely to use mental health care (e.g., Phelan et al. 2000).

The application of the sociological approach to mental health generates considerable empirical work that focuses on economic and other types of social stratification as determinants of mental health and mental disorder. This work is concentrated in research on stressor exposure, social relationships, and societal reaction to mental disorders.

#### *The Stressor Exposure Perspective*

The social context approach is a set of perspectives; the most well-known and applied outside the field of the sociology of mental health is the *stress exposure* perspective, which assumes that a combination or accumulation of stressors and difficulties can cause an onset of mental disorder. This perspective (Brown and Harris 1978; Dohrenwend et al. 1978), dominant in sociology, focuses on the level of change or threat posed by external events, and more recently, on the potential for chronic, unresolved stressors to threaten physical and mental health (Wheaton 1999).

Building on the strong history of social epidemiology in the field, the major assumption of this approach is that differential exposure to stressors by social class or social location is largely determined by social inequalities. In turn, the effects of prolonged stress exposure may perpetuate social inequality through the development of mental illness or disorder in disadvantaged populations (Pearlin et al. 2005). The latter point is more controversial (and in general less well developed theoretically); however the emerging life course or human developmental approach to the accumulation of disadvantage derives in some part from the stress exposure perspective (George 1999). The life course approach assumes that there is an accumulation of the negative effects of differential stressor exposure across life that perpetuates and magnifies inequalities and that many of these processes originate in childhood (e.g., McLeod and Kaiser 2004; McLeod and Nonnemaker 2000). A related stress exposure approach is *stress diathesis*, which assumes that stress exposure causes disorder only when there is a latent vulnerability (Eaton 2001). The diathesis approach is widely applied in psychiatric research on mental disorders.

#### *The Social Relationships Perspective*

Horwitz and Scheid (1999) add that in addition to stressor exposure, resources to help counter the negative impact of stressor exposure or to avoid stressor exposure also are

differentially distributed by social class and location. The major types of social resources that vary by social class are (1) social integration, usually measured as access to meaningful and productive social roles (e.g., Pillemer et al. 2000); (2) social network characteristics (Turner and Turner 1999); (3) family structure (e.g., Turner, Sorenson, and Turner 2000); (4) received and perceived social support (Wethington and Kessler 1986); and (5) coping choices and styles (Pearlin and Schooler 1978; Pearlin et al. 1981). Thoits (1999) has pointed out that this approach, although distinct from the stressor exposure perspective, relies on stress exposure as a mechanism to activate the protective factors.

### *The Societal Reaction Perspective*

In an overview of the sociology of mental health, Thoits (1999) argued that there is no strong evidence that labeling or other societal reaction processes produce mental illness. However, the societal reaction perspective does provide an insight into social biases against those who display symptoms of mental disorder, which are often viewed as socially deviant. Aneshensel and Phelan (1999) concluded that there is a consensus among sociologists of mental health that mental disorders are objective entities and are not completely a product of social constructions. The strongest evidence for this conclusion is that symptoms of mental disorders are observed in all societies, although there are cultural variations in the ways that such symptoms are described and diagnosed.

A difficulty with this position for sociologists of mental health is that it implies there is widespread acceptance of the medical model, which can make theoretical interaction with other streams of sociology (e.g., the sociology of deviance) more contentious. Studies of the etiology of mental disorders in the population no longer routinely employ a deviance perspective. The stressor exposure model also applies a variation of the dose-response paradigm widely used in medical research. This acceptance of a variation of the medical model remains controversial and is probably related to the distance perceived between the sociology of mental health and the more mainstream sociology of stratification.

Yet another tension exists between opposing explanations of what causes social stratification in the distributions of mental disorders. On one side is the belief that routine functioning of society produces some of this stratification, as for example gender differences in the distribution of different types of disorders (Rosenfield 1999). In this view, mental distress and mental disorders can be produced by normal social processes such as gender role socialization. The stress exposure perspective, on the other hand, assumes that abnormal circumstances and events produce mental disorders and distress (Almeida and Kessler 1998). These two views are not necessarily impossible to resolve, but they continue to produce theoretical tensions.

## **The Influence of Psychological Models on the Sociology of Mental Health and Illness**

Another factor producing distance between the sociology of mental health and the general field of sociology is the influence of social psychological theories on the field. As psychology has incorporated facets of the stress exposure perspective, sociologists of mental health have adopted ideas from social and developmental psychology on social support and relationships, coping, and life course development. An influential psychological perspective, the process of *appraisal and coping*, was developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), updated by Lazarus (1999), and has been further elaborated by Folkman and Moskowitz (2004). This perspective, dominant in the field of psychology, has emphasized how individual differences in perceptions of external stressors affect mental health. The focus of appraisal researchers on emotions as motivation for appraisal suggests commonality with biological research on emotion (Massey 2002). The theory of appraisal has been widely cited by sociologists who examine the impact of events on mental health (e.g., Wethington and Kessler 1986).

The life course perspective (Elder 1974), now widely applied in the sociology of mental health (e.g., Wheaton and Clarke 2003; McLeod and Kaiser 2004), traces many of its components to the ecological perspective on human development pioneered by the developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). The life course perspective theorizes that developmental trajectories, developmental or socially normative timing of the stressor, and the accumulation of stressor exposure and resistance factors shape reaction to stressors (Elder, George, and Shanahan 1996). In the last decade, the life course perspective on stress accumulation has also been applied by psychologists, clinical psychologists, and neuroscientists (e.g., Singer and Ryff 1999; McEwen 2002; Repetti, Taylor, and Seeman 2002). Neuroscientists McEwen and Stellar (1993) have developed the concept of *allostatic load* which describes physiological mechanisms for the accumulated effects of past adaptation to stressors on health. Allostatic load is currently being adapted by sociologists to use in studies of stressor exposure across the life course and its relationship to mental health and disorder (Shanahan, Hofer and Shanahan 2003; Shanahan and Hofer 2005).

Sociological and psychological research streams on the relationship between stressor exposure and mental health are converging through collaborative efforts that examine the impact of stressor accumulation along the individual life course (Elder et al. 1996; Singer et al. 1998). A serious problem, however, is that most measures of stressor exposure available to researchers focus on recent exposures rather than the interactions of different types of stressor exposure over the long term; the majority of stressor exposure measures used in research are simple counts or sums of life events occurring over a short period of time (Wheaton 1999). Investigating the relationships between stressors over

time and their combined associations with mental health and well-being is an important strategy for examining the impact of stressors over the life course (George 1999).

## Methodological Controversies

Issues of causality and theoretical approach are controversial in the field. Given the complexity and controversies in the sociology of mental health and illness, it is not surprising that one of the critical areas of the field is measurement. The two most disputed areas involve the measurement of outcomes and the measurement of stressor exposure.

### *Measures of Mental Health and Disorder*

The controversy begins with the outcomes. There is an increasing consensus that positive mental health and well-being is not just the absence of mental illness or disorder (Keyes 2002). There is also a controversy over whether dichotomous diagnoses of psychiatric disorder should be a proper outcome for sociological inquiry, in contrast to scales of distress symptoms (Kessler 2002; Mirowsky and Ross 2002).

Research diagnostic measures of mental disorder are controversial on many dimensions. Wakefield (1999) criticized the diagnostic measures used in the Epidemiological Catchment Area and National Comorbidity Studies for overestimating the prevalence of lifetime mental disorder in the United States. The NCS estimated that one-half of all Americans will suffer from a mental disorder over their lifetime (Kessler et al. 1994). A recent reanalysis of the NCS (Narrow et al. 2002), applying a standard of clinical seriousness based on other questions available in the survey, reduced the lifetime prevalence estimates significantly to 32 percent lifetime prevalence.

Another issue of controversy is whether a dichotomous outcome measure of disorder, one either has the disorder or not, misses levels of distress or poor social functioning that indicate considerable mental suffering (Kessler 2002; Mirowsky and Ross 2002). Persistent or recurring symptoms of sleeplessness, fatigue, sadness, loneliness, lack of appetite, and loss of interest in things in response to chronic stressors or unexpected life events can be unpleasant and disabling even if the sufferer does not show all of the symptoms of depression required for a diagnosis. The high threshold required for a diagnosis of disorder may understate emotional responses to events in the population at large. Whereas mental disorders may be relatively uncommon, symptoms of distress in response to life events are commonly observed and may indicate the presence of social dysfunction and strain in ways that surveys of mental disorders do not.

### *Measures of Stressor Exposure*

Measures of stressor exposure are particularly problematic in the sociology of mental health (Wheaton 1999).

A complicating factor is that other mental health disciplines enforce higher standards of precision in measurement than does sociology. In addition, the majority of studies using stressor exposure measures do not account for any interaction between combinations of particular types of stressors. Applying the life course perspective model on mental health would ultimately require more sophisticated measures on how stressors combine and interact across time.

Both the biomedical and sociological streams of research on stress processes share an interest in environmental triggers of distress (Selye 1956). Following Selye, early stress researchers applied Selye's assumption that all environmental threats activated the same or similar physiological response, using sums of exposures to different types of stressful events (Turner and Wheaton 1995). Almost immediately, sociologists and other social researchers modified this assumption, finding that more explicit and comprehensive measurement of the characteristics of stressors often increased the amount of variance explained in the mental health outcome. These measures included the estimated average "magnitude of change" scores in Social Readjustment Rating Scale (the SRRS: Holmes and Rahe 1967) and the Psychiatric Epidemiology Research Interview for Life Events (the PERI; Dohrenwend et al. 1978). Furthermore, it became clear that other characteristics of stressors, such as their type, timing, duration, severity, unexpectedness, controllability and impacts on other aspects of life make significant contributions to the stress response and mental health outcome (e.g., Brown and Harris 1978, 1989; Pearlin and Schooler 1978; Wethington, Brown, and Kessler 1995).

The stress exposure model is evolving to model the dynamic, continuous adaptation to stressors over time (e.g., Heckhausen and Schulz 1995; Lazarus 1999; Folkman and Moskowitz 2004). Sociologists have developed measures of chronic stress exposure (Pearlin and Schooler 1978) and exposure to stressors and hassles on a daily basis (Almeida, Wethington, and Kessler 2002). Researchers debate the relative reliability and validity of self-report checklist and interview measures of life events that include detailed probes that enable investigators to rate the severity of life events (Wheaton 1999). Most recently, psychologists have contributed to understanding variations in the relationships of different types of stressors (social loss vs. trauma and chronic vs. acute stressor exposure), to immune system function and cortisol activity (e.g., Dickerson and Kemeny 2004; Segerstrom and Miller 2004). Sociologists are now considering the potential for using measures of physiological activity (e.g., cortisol measurement) in their studies (Shanahan et al. 2003).

Applying the life course perspective to studying mental disorders and health over time has led to concern about the reliability and validity of retrospective measures of stressor exposure (Wethington et al. 1995; Wheaton 1999). Empirical research on memory for life events over a relatively short recall period is reassuring; most severe events



can be recalled quite well over a 12-month retrospective period (Kessler and Wethington 1991). Serious concerns remain about longer retrospective recall periods. This concern is partially mitigated by the development of life history calendar methods, visual memory aids that can be used in interviews to enhance memory for life events (Freedman et al. 1988).

## The Social Epidemiology of Mental Disorders

Despite the complexity of measurement, sociologists have pioneered the study of psychiatric sociology, or the epidemiology of mental disorders. The recent advances of measurement in the ECA and NCS studies have produced measures of outcomes that are scientifically accepted across disciplines (Cockerham 2005). These studies have also provided critical data on the use of mental health services by those who suffer from significant disorders and have had a major influence on other fields of study. The major epidemiological research questions have focused around the distribution of mental disorders and illnesses by social factors, including gender, socioeconomic status, marital status, race, and ethnicity. There is some, but more limited work, on factors such as ethnicity, migration, and location.

### *Gender*

There is dispute whether the overall rate of mental disorders and illnesses differs by gender. The consensus before the publication of national data from the NCS was that men and women did not differ overall in rates of mental disorders; rather, different types of disorders are distributed differently. Women are more likely to report depressed affect and depressive disorders. Men, in turn, are more likely to report alcohol and drug disorders, violent behavior, and other indicators of acting out. Major psychoses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are not distributed unequally by gender. There is now accumulating evidence that women are also more likely to report anxiety disorders (Kessler et al. 1994, 2005), which would mean that women are overall more likely to have mental disorders. Although there is continuing interest among biological and medical scientists to find a biological cause for women's higher rates of some disorders, particularly depression, among sociologists social cause explanations still hold sway (e.g., Rosenfield 1999).

### *Socioeconomic Status*

One of the most consistent findings in the epidemiology of mental disorders is that those of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to develop mental disorders (Cockerham 2005; Gallagher 2002). This general finding was confirmed by the NCS (Kessler and Zhao 1999). There is evidence, however, that those of higher statuses are more likely to suffer from affective disorders; the overrepresentation of mental disorders is due to higher

rates of schizophrenia and some personality disorders among those of lower socioeconomic status.

Among sociologists of mental health, social causation theories continue to dominate, but more attention is being given to selection processes, especially the impact of mental disorders on upward economic mobility (e.g., Miech et al. 1999). Researchers who apply the life course perspective often study selection and economic mobility processes directly, most particularly those processes that affect educational attainment in early adulthood (e.g., McLeod and Kaiser 2004).

### *Race*

There remains considerable controversy in the literature whether members of racial minority groups report higher rates of mental disorder than majority racial groups. Given the relationship of socioeconomic status to mental health and disorders, it is logical to predict that rates of mental disorder in African Americans would be higher than the rates among white Americans because of the average lower socioeconomic status of blacks. Such a pattern would also reflect the additional burden of discrimination and prejudice and the impact such burdens have on mental well-being (Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams 1999).

The pattern of racial and ethnic differences, however, is more complex. For example, an analysis of risk and persistence of mental disorders among U.S. ethnic groups (Breslau et al. 2005) found that Hispanics reported lower lifetime prevalence of substance use disorders than whites, and that blacks reported lower lifetime prevalence of mood (depression or mania), anxiety, and substance use disorders. However, Hispanics were more likely to report persistent mood disorders (defined as recurrence of a past disorder), and blacks were more likely to report persistent mood and anxiety disorders. Research is needed on the factors that mitigate the impact of stressors on mental health of minority groups. Other researchers call for more attention to how mental disorders are measured and diagnosed in African Americans and other minority groups (e.g., Neighbors et al. 2003).

### *Marital Status*

Although there is some evidence that pattern of mental distress by marital status may be changing as cohabitation becomes more socially accepted, the consensus still holds that married people are in better mental health and report fewer mental disorders than those who are not currently married. New research (Umberson and Williams 1999) points to the quality of the marital relationship as critical to mental well-being and health; those in unsatisfying or high-conflict marriages report poor mental health. Divorce is associated with poorer mental health over time, particularly among those who did not initiate the divorce.

Evidence such as that noted above is taken to mean that marriage confers benefits on mental health and may

provide some protection against mental illness. Umberson and Williams (1999) note, however, that relatively little research has been done that has pitted the benefits of marriage perspective directly against the alternative social selection perspective that those who have mental disorders are less likely to marry or to remain married. Forthofer et al. (1996) estimated the relationship of age of onset of mental disorder on the probability of subsequent marriage. They found that those who have disorders are less likely to be married and when they marry have a higher risk of divorce. Unfortunately, studies that examine both social causation and social selection perspectives on marital status and mental health remain relatively rare, most likely because of the absence of satisfactory longitudinal data that can be used to address this issue.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF MENTAL HEALTH**

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One of the tensions in the sociology of mental health and illness is the interdisciplinary orientation of the field. Concepts are freely borrowed along the border of sociology and psychiatry/psychology. Much work is applied, or meant to be applied, to issues of importance to social policy, such as the social costs of untreated mental disorders. The life course perspective (Elder et al. 1996) is changing how research is done and how questions are being asked. New directions in the field include (1) a focus on comorbidity and severity of illness and its social impact, (2) the need for a closer connection between epidemiology and research on mental health services and policy, (3) the press to develop better measures of stressor exposure, (4) demand for more sophisticated measures and analyses of social resources, and (5) and the challenge of biological research on the stress process to the sociological study of mental health.

### **Comorbidity**

The study of comorbidity of mental disorders in people has transformed some aspects of the sociology of mental health. First, the documentation of comorbidity has influenced sociologists in the field to accept that mental illness is an objective reality. Second, it has become clear that those who are comorbid for multiple disorders are severely disabled in many important life roles. Their progress through life resembles the life path of “social selection.” Third, the acceptance that mental disorders are real physical entities, and the evidence for comorbidity are challenges to the environmental perspective on mental disorders. It is likely that those who have mental disorders attract or create stressor exposure (Eaton 2001). Thus, one major direction for sociological research in the future might be an emphasis on mental disorders as predictors, rather than outcomes, of social functioning and processes.

## **Mental Health Services and Policy**

When reviewing the state of the sociology of mental health, Horwitz and Scheid (1999) observed that research on the social contexts of mental disorder and research on mental health services do not intersect all that much. They believed that this is because the two fields of research operate on different levels of analysis, one at the individual level and the other at the social or institutional level. A challenge for future research is to connect these two levels of analysis. Research on the social epidemiology of mental health and illness can inform organizations at all levels about the costs of untreated mental disorders to organizations and society in general.

### **Better Measures of Stress Exposure**

As Wheaton (1999) observed, the social stress model requires considerable new development. This chapter has pointed out a number of methodological difficulties in measuring stressor exposure and the lack of fit between the most widely used measures of stressor exposure and the newly emerging life course perspective. Another advance would come through more detailed studies of how stressors are distributed in the population at large. Does the uneven distribution of stressors in the population “explain” the negative mental health outcomes for some groups? More research is needed in this area, ideally from the life course perspective, using longitudinal samples.

### **Better Measures of Social Resources**

There is also a need for more research on the social distribution of resources that mitigate the impact of environmental challenges and stresses. Reviews of research on social support and social integration (e.g., Berkman and Glass 2000; Cohen et al. 2000; Pillemer et al. 2000) point out deficiencies in current measures of these resources. Do minority groups gain extra protection by asserting their identity and uniqueness? What is the social distribution of protective social resources? Do differences in distribution explain group differences in mental health?

## **The Biological Perspective on Mental Disorders**

The sociology of mental health is faced with a new challenge from the field of neuroscience. This research tends to be favored by federal funding agencies because of beliefs that neuroscience can lead to the discovery of new cures or therapeutic approaches to mental disorders. Neuroscience and its measurement equipment such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and cortisol sampling have the cachet of basic or “bench” science, while the observational and epidemiological approach of sociology is being portrayed as lower-quality science. However, the rise of neuroscience in research on mental disorders does not necessarily mean that social causes are

irrelevant. The power of the new neuroscience of mental disorders is that it assumes there is an interaction between social factors and biological processes (McEwen 2002).

Yet there are serious impediments to the integration of sociological and biological research. One formidable impediment in sociology is the assumption that the biological perspective would reduce the entire stress process to individual differences in physical response, thus making environmental causation moot. Another impediment is that sociologists do not yet fully appreciate how much the

biological approach to stress already incorporates measures of social context and stressors in studying adjustment to stressful events and situations (Singer and Ryff 1999). Sociologists (e.g., Pearlin et al. 1981) have long pointed out that the process of adjusting to stressors is a critical component of sociological and social psychological theories of the stress process (Thoits 1995). Thus, another challenge to sociologists of mental health is to incorporate techniques and measures that will powerfully represent the social context in multidisciplinary studies of mental health and mental disorders.

## SOCIOBIOLOGY

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Sociobiology is relevant to sociology for a number of important reasons. First, and foremost, sociobiology claims to be a general science of social behavior embracing all organisms, not just humans. This means that sociology is at least a subfield of this wider discipline, and at best a parallel one, mirroring at the human level social behavior seen throughout nature. Second, sociobiology is important because methodologically it has taken a quite different line to traditional sociology and has seen itself as a branch of evolutionary science enshrining a “bottom-up,” reductive approach to social behavior rather than the “top-down,” more holistic approach traditional in sociology. Finally, sociobiology is important because its theories and findings, however they may be regarded, have challenged sociology to respond to them, just as sociology, in its own way, has challenged sociobiology to respond to it.

### SOCIAL THEORY IN SOCIOBIOLOGY

The term *sociobiology* first came to notice when the entomologist E. O. Wilson published his great work *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Wilson 1975). Although associated with Wilson ever since, the movement now known as sociobiology was in fact based predominantly on the insights of the English evolutionary geneticist, W. D. Hamilton (1936–2000). Hamilton had read genetics at Cambridge in the early 1960s and at a time when Darwin’s work was still very much under a cloud as far as undergraduate-level studies were concerned. Although Darwin’s great work on the origin of species had been published in 1859, acceptance of his theories by the biological establishment

had been very slow in coming. The principal reason was that Darwin himself had professed a “Lamarckian” theory of “inheritance of acquired characteristics” (he called it *Pangenesis*, after a Greek precedent) that failed to accord well with his crucial mechanism of natural selection. Because naturally selected traits must be inherited to have any effect on evolution, Darwin’s failure to correctly account for inheritance was a serious obstacle to the acceptance of his theory. Furthermore, it was an obstacle that got considerably more serious when Gregor Mendel’s (1822–1884) discovery of the laws of inheritance finally came to general notice at the turn of the twentieth century. At first it seemed as if Mendelian inheritance contradicted evolution by natural selection, and it was not until the 1930s that R. A. Fisher (1890–1963) and others proved the contrary and established Darwinism on a firm genetic and mathematical foundation. This, in the subtitle of another famous book, J. S. Huxley’s *Evolution*, became known as the “modern synthesis” (Huxley 1942).

Ironically, in view of his association with sociobiology, Wilson himself always retained a link with an alternative tradition of evolutionary thinking that stemmed from Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), also of course the founder of British sociology. Spencer was responsible for popularizing the term *evolution*—used by Darwin only once in *The Origin of Species*, where “evolved” is the final word of the book. Part of the reason for Darwin’s reluctance was that his concept of evolution was very different from Spencer’s. Whereas Spencer saw evolution as a cosmic process of progressive development toward larger, more complex, and more integrated entities culminating ultimately in Victorian industrial society, Darwin spoke of

“descent with modification” and interpreted evolution simply as a process of gradual change whose antithesis was *revolution* (sudden change), by contrast to the *dissolution* that Spencer’s understanding of evolution implied. Specifically, Darwin denied that evolution was inherently progressive, and his theory contrasted with Spencer’s in being scientific, and based on observable facts, rather than being philosophical in inspiration, and founded on a belief in the inevitability of progress. However, confusion of Spencer’s and Darwin’s concepts of evolution remains common, especially in the social sciences (Freeman 1974).

One of Spencer’s central concepts was that of the *superorganism*. According to this way of looking at it, just as an organism is made up of cells, so a superorganism is made up of individual organisms. Examples quoted by Spencer include insect and human societies, and it is this concept of the superorganic that E. O. Wilson has continued to endorse—particularly in relation to his principal interest: the social insects, and ants in particular (Wilson 1971). Spencer’s holistic, superorganismic concept of society powerfully influenced Émile Durkheim (1859–1917) and via such sociological predecessors many subsequent sociologists, such as Talcott Parsons (1902–1979). Indeed, it remains to this day a defining paradigm for the subject: Society is an entity in itself, greater than the sum of its parts.

Spencer had coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” to epitomize what he believed to be Darwin’s theory of natural selection. But “survival of the fittest” was not a phrase Darwin himself used very often, and with hindsight, it is easy to see why. First, “survival of the fittest” creates the impression that natural selection selects for fitness understood in medical or sporting terms. But this fails to take account of the fact that, as far as natural selection is concerned, it is reproductive success, not individual fitness that matters. Looked at from the ultimate point of view of evolution, survival is only a means to reproductive success, and an organism, no matter how “fit” it might be, can only contribute to evolution by passing on its traits to its offspring. Human males, for example, live longer and suffer less from most types of pathology if they are castrated, but males without testes have not been selected for obvious reasons. Again, “survival of the fittest” also raises the question of the fittest *what*—individual, group, society, or species? Inevitably, Spencer’s slogan implied social Darwinism: The belief that, just as the fittest individual organism was favored by natural selection, so the fittest group, class, society, or race would be. This, combined with the belief that “fitness” could be promoted by eugenics, did much to bring social Darwinism into disrepute in the twentieth-century (Dawkins 1982).

Spencer’s survival-of-the-fittest social Darwinism, along with his ever-on-and-upward-toward-something-bigger-and-better view of evolution made the social superorganism seemingly inevitable and unproblematic. However, Darwin’s more sober view of evolution by natural selection created serious difficulties where accounting

for social behavior was concerned. For example, if only natural selection is invoked, how can it account for the fact that the vast majority of workers in insect societies are sterile females? Surely, a fertile worker would have greater reproductive success by definition than a sterile one, and so sterility would soon be selected out (particularly in view of the fact that females of such species can reproduce without males). Indeed, a simple “thought experiment” seems to prove the evolution of any kind of altruism impossible. The term *altruism* was first introduced by another founder of sociology, Auguste Comte (1798–1857), but can be defined objectively and quantitatively in biology (another term we owe to him) as *any contribution to the reproductive success of the recipient at a cost to the reproductive success of the altruist*. Consider an altruistic species where every individual acts to benefit the others: a single selfish mutant will have more reproductive success than the altruists because by definition, whereas they will make sacrifices of their reproductive success for the benefit of the reproductive success of the selfish mutant, the mutant itself will never make such a sacrifice for them. After a while, altruists will be driven to extinction and the species invaded by the selfish mutants. Now consider the converse: Imagine that in a species of selfish organisms an altruistic mutant appears. By definition, the mutant will promote the reproductive success of the selfish at a cost to itself and become extinct in no time. Nevertheless altruism, even when defined in this wholly objective way, is very common in nature, as Darwin was the first to realize (Badcock 2000:72–79).

This so-called problem of altruism was the subject chosen by Hamilton for his Ph.D. thesis, partly supervised in the Department of Sociology at the London School of Economics. Based on the mathematics of population genetics developed by Fisher and others, Hamilton developed a mathematical model devised to explore the paradox of how natural selection acting on individual genes could select for altruism as defined above. The simplest expression of what turned out to be a complex and recondite piece of mathematics is what is now known as *Hamilton’s inequality*. This states that altruism will evolve by natural selection acting on individual genes if  $Br > C$ , where  $B$  is the benefit to the reproductive success of the recipient,  $C$  is the cost to the reproductive success of the altruist, and  $r$  is the coefficient of relatedness of the two (Hamilton 1963).

This insight explained worker sterility in insect societies because the peculiarities of their genetic system meant that a worker ant or bee was more closely related (had higher  $r$  in other words) to her sisters, the other offspring of the queen, than she was to any offspring she might have of her own. But for Hamilton, this was an afterthought, and his insight does not rely on insect genetics fundamentally. For example, suppose I have a gene for self-sacrifice in the interests of my offspring. Because each of my offspring has a 50 percent chance of inheriting such a gene, saving three of them would preserve 150 percent of it on average, whereas sacrificing myself in doing so

would lose 100 percent of it—a clear gain in terms of the gene's reproductive success (Hamilton 1964).

The implications of this insight were controversial and often misunderstood in biology for a long time, so it is not surprising that the situation was a lot worse in sociology. Here, it is worth pointing out that George Price (1923–1975)—a real altruist if ever there was one, who died penniless after spending his considerable means on helping others—set out to disprove Hamilton and to refute his theory (Kohn 2004). But in the event Price discovered a much more elegant mathematical expression than Hamilton's original one and ended up wholly endorsing it (Price 1970). In short, Price's attempt to refute Hamilton in fact corroborated the theory, and today the Hamilton-Price equations remain the uncontested mathematical foundation of modern Darwinism (Frank 1995). This was "The New Synthesis" of Wilson's subtitle to *Sociobiology* recalling "The Modern Synthesis" of Darwin and Mendel alluded to in the subtitle of Huxley's earlier book. Essentially, it is a synthesis of Darwinism and population genetics based on Hamilton's central insight. Hamilton had answered the *fittest what?* conundrum by showing that natural selection is ultimately a question of the survival of the fittest genes. However, because identical genes can be shared by relatives, he solved the problem of altruism by showing that behavior that appeared to harm a gene in one organism could more than compensate by promoting the same gene's survival in another: so-called inclusive fitness. Richard Dawkins later popularized the idea in his best seller *The Selfish Gene*, and many words have been wasted arguing against it (Dawkins 1978). But protestations against Dawkins's and others' purely verbal metaphors carry no weight with the fundamental science of Hamilton's theory, which is based on the Hamilton-Price equations, and on what is now a vast array of factual findings, most of which would be unintelligible otherwise.

Sociological reactions to the selfish gene metaphor have often been confused by sociologists' own Spencerian, superorganic assumptions, for example, the charge of "reductionism" or "individualism," which is often brought against sociobiology. Sociologists often assume that a top-down, holistic approach is inherently social, virtuous, and correct, by contrast to a bottom-up, reductionistic one, which is implicitly antisocial, vicious, and wrong. In Durkheim's case this was enshrined in a Hobbesian approach to the problem of social order: The belief that what Hobbes called "the state of nature" was one of murderous anarchy, only remedied by constraint imposed from above. Although Durkheim substituted society in the form of the *conscience collective* for Hobbes's absolute monarch, the solution was essentially the same, and explains the anathematization of individualism in such top-down, holistic thinking. However, one of Hamilton's other important insights was that social behavior in general, and group membership in particular, need not be imposed on recalcitrant individuals by preexisting social wholes such as societies, classes, or groups. In a paradigmatic paper,

Hamilton presented a mathematical model that showed that individuals have an incentive to join a group if their personal vulnerability to predation, for example, can be reduced by so doing. Subsequent studies have confirmed that much group behavior in animals can be explained by the simple insight that hiding behind the other members of the group pays all the members. This is particularly so if the group is a large one, and applies to temporal clustering also (female wildebeest, for example, synchronize giving birth because, although newborn calves are highly vulnerable to predators, the chances of any individual female's calf being attacked are greatly reduced by the vast numbers born at the same time) (Hamilton 1971).

In other words, Hobbes was wrong about the "state of nature," which is not one of "war of all against all," but often one of surprising cooperation. Nevertheless, sociobiology was able to correct earlier errors on the part of ethologists such as Konrad Lorenz (1903–1989), who had claimed that violence is instinctively inhibited in animals for the benefit of the species—particularly in those armed with lethal weapons, such as canines. Such top-down, biological holism had earlier been enshrined in the official, Soviet Marxist biology of Trofim Lysenko (1898–1976), whose *law of self-thinning out* held that if planted in thick clusters, saplings would "sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the species," adding that "the death of individual saplings in the group occurs not because they are crowded, but for the express purpose of ensuring that in the future they will not be crowded" (Medvedev 1969:162–170). About a billion old rubles was wasted on such plantings in the then USSR, where the vast majority of all the trees planted according to this "law" of Marxist biology died.

In Western biology, such top-down, holistic thinking was more implied than practiced until the Scottish biologist Wynne-Edwards explicitly articulated the theory in a well-known book (Wynne-Edwards 1986). However, overwhelming factual evidence soon accumulated against Wynne-Edwards's idea that species, for example, control their reproduction to prevent eating themselves out of existence. Meticulous field studies by David Lack (1910–1973) in particular showed that in birds many species that can normally raise only one chick per season habitually lay two eggs. For example, in one species of eagle, 200 nests with clutches of two eggs were found, but in only one did both chicks survive to fledge. This means that 99.5 percent of second eggs was wasted by the species, representing a very considerable squandering of scarce resources. The explanation, of course, is more individualistic: If natural selection is a question of the reproductive success of parents' genes jointly invested in offspring, in species where only one offspring can normally be raised per season it is critical to the parents' reproductive success to have one to raise. The second egg is a backup, so to speak, usually ignored if the first to hatch thrives, but ready if it fails (and, of course, a second also retains the opportunity of doubling the parents' reproductive

success in that season if exceptionally good resources happen to be available) (Magrath 1989).

These findings illustrate what is often seen as *the fallacy of group selection*. However, since natural selection can undoubtedly act on entire groups—and even species—as well as on individuals, a better way of highlighting the fallacy involved here might be to say that it is not so much group selection as such that is fallacious as the belief that natural selection will automatically favor traits that benefit the group at a cost to the individuals who make it up. Here the problem is enshrined in what is often called *the free rider theorem*: Individuals will always have an incentive to gain a benefit of group membership without paying the cost, or alternatively not to pay an additional cost from which they will gain no more benefit than any other member. Either way, it is naïve to believe that merely citing the benefits of group membership is enough to explain why groups exist, and this essentially is the root of the so-called fallacy of group selection (Badcock 2000:77).

The same issue of cooperation with a mutual benefit or defection in the individual's self-interest is epitomized in the *Prisoner's Dilemma* (so called after the common practice of interrogating a suspect in a crime committed with another alone but with the incentive to incriminate the other suspect). Prisoner's Dilemma could be seen as the atom of society: Two individuals have the choice of either cooperating in their mutual benefit or defecting in their self-interest. However, payoffs are weighted so that selfish defection where the other cooperates (usually denoted as  $T$ ) is worth more than mutual cooperation ( $R$ ), while mutual defection ( $P$ ) is better than the worst outcome of all: cooperating when the other defects ( $S$ ):  $T > R > P > S$  (additionally  $R > (T + S)/2$ , otherwise Prisoner's Dilemma is a game of chance, or could be resolved by players taking turns defecting). In a one-shot Prisoner's Dilemma, the rational choice is, of course, to defect because this may win you the biggest payoff ( $T$ ) and protects you against the worst ( $S$ ); but because both players ought to know this, one-shot interactions hardly encourage cooperation. However, the situation is transformed if Prisoner's Dilemma is iterated or repeated indefinitely. In the early 1980s, the political scientist Robert Axelrod announced an international tournament for computer programs to play iterated Prisoner's Dilemma. The winner was the simplest strategy entered: TIT-FOR-TAT, one which cooperated on the first round but thereafter repeated the other player's previous choice. Axelrod comments that "expert strategists from political science, sociology, economics, psychology and mathematics made the systematic errors of being too competitive for their own good, not being forgiving enough, and being too pessimistic about the responsiveness of the other side" (Axelrod 1984:40). He adds that TIT-FOR-TAT won, not by doing better than any other player, but by eliciting cooperation from the other player. In this way TIT-FOR-TAT does well by promoting the mutual interest rather than by exploiting the other's weakness. A moral person could not do better (Axelrod 1984:137).

Iterated Prisoner's Dilemma, in other words, proved that cooperation could evolve spontaneously in a world of self-interest and from bottom-up two-person interactions, not simply from top-down, holistic social forces such as those popular with sociologists. Like Hamilton's insight into groups, it explained how social behavior could be naturally selected at the most basic level and how mutuality could be a robust evolutionary strategy. Above all, it gave the lie to the common caricature of sociobiology as a form of social Darwinism, with individuals and groups set against each other in a merciless struggle for survival. Indeed, Robert Trivers, Hamilton's chief American collaborator, went on to show that reciprocity of this kind could become the basis of cooperation between organisms of different species, as in the so-called cleaning symbioses (Trivers 1971).

## FAMILY CONFLICT AND COOPERATION

In the bird species such as eagles mentioned earlier that lay two eggs but normally hatch only one, the second hatchling is often consumed by its thriving sibling, causing natural revulsion to human beings and appearing to reinforce the common sociological caricature of sociobiology as endorsing rapacious violence and mindless murder. But of course this is a caricature, as can be seen by considering another, parallel example with an exactly opposite inference: infanticide in langur monkeys. Dominant male langur monkeys who take over harems of females habitually murder all infants under six months of age and still suckling at the time. This has been claimed to be "population control" for the benefit of the species because it dramatically affects population growth thanks to the fact that over a third of all infants can die this way (Hrdy 2000). If such dominant males were capable of it, presumably they would cite authorities such as Lysenko or Wynne-Edwards in justification! Nevertheless, mothers attempt to protect their infants from being murdered, apparently against the interests of the species. Furthermore, population control would be more effective if only young, nubile females were culled (because population growth is critically constrained by their numbers), yet the carnage is indiscriminate. Again, dominant males often control groups for several years, but only murder offspring in the first six months, evidently losing their interest in population control thereafter. The true reason is that since gestation lasts about six months in this species, any offspring under that age will have to be the progeny of the previous dominant male. Furthermore, any females who stop suckling because their existing infants have been killed by the new male quickly come into estrus again and so can be quickly remated by him. Langur infanticide, in other words, favors the reproductive self-interest of the dominant males who carry it out; it most emphatically does not serve the interests of the females who lose their offspring or that of the infants who die. As Robert Trivers (1981), Hamilton's principal American follower, remarked,

When critics argued that sociobiology tended to justify existing social arrangements, they were, of course, imputing to sociobiology a pre-Darwinian, species-advantage perspective. . . . Arguments in terms of natural selection only appear to justify that which has evolved when one imagines—incorrectly—that traits evolve for the benefit of the species . . . such reasoning . . . tends to distract attention from the self-interest of the subordinate actors. No one analyzes how selection acts on them. Thus counter-strategies are overlooked, and resistance tends to be minimized. Conflict is overlooked or explained away as serving some larger function. . . . Our destruction of group-selection thinking has removed the chief prop from the comfortable belief that the dominant interests naturally rule in everybody's self-interest. . . . Those who took up the cry against sociobiology because it appeared to slight the interests of the oppressed failed to appreciate that the foundations of sociobiology have precisely the opposite effect: they call attention to the self-interest of all subordinated actors. (Pp. 36–39)

In many ways, the most striking human applications of sociobiological insights—not least by Robert Trivers—have been into family conflict and cooperation. For example, Daly and Wilson (1988) studied homicide as a corollary of Hamilton's key insight, reasoning that inclusive fitness would be promoted not merely by kin positively benefiting one another but by kin avoiding harming one another. They showed that in 1972, 75 percent of all murders of relatives in Detroit were of those where there was no actual blood tie between the family members. Furthermore, they argued that coresidence could not be the explanation: Coresidents with no blood tie were 11 times more likely to be murdered than coresidents who were related by blood. Again, they showed that 30 percent of comurderers in Miami were blood relatives, but only 2 percent of victims were blood relatives of their murderers. Nor are such findings peculiar to modern societies or to North America: On the contrary, there is no known society, nor has there ever been one, where violence between blood-related relatives even approaches the level seen between nonblood relatives.

The same authors showed that much the same is true of stepparents and stepchildren as compared with biological parents and their natural children. In one survey, only 53 percent of stepfathers and 25 percent of stepmothers claimed "parental feelings" toward their stepchildren, and statistics on child abuse show that a child living with one or more stepparents in the United States in 1976 was 100 times more likely to be murdered by them than was a child living with both biological parents. They conclude that "step-parenthood per se remains the single most powerful risk factor for child abuse . . . yet identified" (Daly and Wilson 1988:87–88).

Nevertheless, perhaps the most counterintuitive insights of the selfish gene approach have been into conflict and cooperation within the biological family. At first sight, parent-offspring conflict looks impossible from a biological point of view, because parents and offspring normally

share the same proportion of genes: 50 percent. But Trivers showed that if what is at issue is the readiness of offspring to make sacrifices for one another, then the situation is asymmetric. This is because parents are equally related to all their full, joint offspring: Each invests exactly half its genes. Therefore, any sacrifice by any offspring for any other that produces a net benefit, no matter how small, promotes the reproductive success of the parents. Offspring, on the other hand, are only related by 50 percent of their genes at most (and less if they only share one parent in common). Therefore, the offspring's genetic self-interest is only to perform an act of altruism toward a full sibling where  $Br > C$ : In other words, where benefit to the siblings is more than twice the cost to itself. To put it another way, *parents are selected to favor at least twice as much altruism—or half as much selfishness (which comes to the same thing)—as offspring are selected to favor* (Trivers 1974).

As Trivers (1981) himself points out, the implication of this is that "it is clearly a mistake to view socialization in humans as only, or even primarily, a process of 'enculturation' by which parents teach offspring their culture." He adds that

one is not permitted to assume that parents who attempt to impart such virtues as responsibility, decency, honesty, trustworthiness, generosity, and self-denial are merely providing the offspring with useful information on the appropriate behavior in the local culture; for all such virtues are likely to affect the amount of altruistic and egoistic behavior impinging on the parent's kin, and parent and offspring are expected to view such behavior differently.

On the contrary,

socialization is a process by which parents attempt to mould each offspring in order to increase their own inclusive fitness, whereas each offspring is selected to resist some of the molding and to attempt to mould the behavior of its parents (and siblings) in order to increase its own inclusive fitness. Conflict during socialization need not be viewed solely as conflict between the culture of the parent and the biology of the child, it can also be viewed as conflict between the biology of the parent and the biology of the child. . . . Since teaching (as opposed to molding) is expected to be recognized by offspring as being in their own self-interest, parents would be expected to overemphasize their role as teachers in order to minimize resistance in their young. According to this view, then, the prevailing concept of socialization is to some extent a view that one would expect adults to entertain and disseminate. (Pp. 30–32)

Furthermore, that "prevailing concept of socialization" is of course also that of sociology: It is one that, by contrast to the sociobiological view, sides with the parents against the child and again exemplifies the force of Trivers's (1981) observation that sociobiology "uncovered the submerged actors in the social world, for example, . . . offspring, whose separate self-interest . . . we emphasize" (p. 39).



## SEX AND PARENTAL INVESTMENT

Darwin did not invoke only natural selection in his attempt to explain evolution. From the beginning, he also appealed to what he came to call *sexual selection* understood as selection for traits that promoted the reproductive success of individual members of a species in competition with other members of the same sex. Although Darwin's 1872 book *The Descent of Man, or Selection in Relation to Sex* was a best seller at the time it was published, sexual selection remained a largely rejected idea for a century. Even Alfred Russel Wallace (1823–1913), who independently discovered evolution by natural selection and was a lifelong collaborator, refused to accept the concept of sexual selection, along with just about all other naturalists and biologists—not to mention lay opinion. But like so much else associated with sociobiology, it was R. A. Fisher who made the first major step in rehabilitating the idea when he began to examine sexual selection quantitatively. Building on his work, Robert Trivers (1972) published a chapter in a book marking the centenary of Darwin's *Descent of Man* in which he established the basis of the modern theory of sexual selection. Following Fisher, Trivers defined the sexes in terms of the concept of *parental investment* defined as *any contribution to the reproductive success of an offspring at a cost to the remainder of the parent's reproductive success* (Trivers 1972). The trade-off implied here is illustrated by lactation in mammals, which contributes to the existing offspring at a cost to future ones by making the mother temporarily infertile (human mothers included). The sexes can in turn be defined in terms of their characteristically different pattern of parental investment. In modern biology, *female* is defined as *the sex with maximum investment in sex cells and/or offspring*, whereas *male* is *the sex with minimum investment in sex cells and/or offspring*. Male sex cells are *pollen* in plants or *sperm* in animals, usually microscopic and mobile, and in the human case, the smallest in the body. Female sex cells are *ovules* or *ova*, and are the largest in human body.

Where organisms such as mammals make further investment in offspring beyond the original sex cells, the disparity between male and female parental investment can reach staggering proportions. In human beings, for example, the energetic cost to the mother of a pregnancy amounts to about 80,000 calories (which equals 300 hamburger meals), or enough for a run of 800 miles; while in the United States, recently the going rate for egg donation was \$5,000 to 80,000, but for sperm donation only \$100! Finally, in terms of risk of death during pregnancy, childbirth, or abortion, the figure is a staggering 1 in 21 in sub-Saharan Africa, and 1 in 9,850 in the West (Potts and Short 1999:134). The risk to the father, by contrast, is exactly zero wherever he may be, and his only biologically obligatory contribution—a single sperm—is billions of times less than that of the mother as a proportion of the body weight of a newborn!

Of course, fathers can and do make impressive investments in their offspring in other ways than the directly biological. But even in this respect, the theory of parental investment explains facts that otherwise find no real explanation. Here, the relevant finding is that although remuneration of unmarried people of both sexes is broadly similar, a striking difference is observed when people marry, and especially when they have children. Typically, married men who have children increase their working hours, incomes, and pursuit of promotion, whereas women with children typically decrease all these things, just as the theory of parental investment would predict (Budig and England 2001).

If we ask what consequences follow from the fundamental difference between the sexes defined in terms of parental investment, we could immediately predict that, if one sex produces many more sex cells and invests much less in them than the other, that sex ought potentially at least to be able to engender many more offspring. A striking example of the cumulative effect of male, as opposed to female, reproductive success is provided by the members of the modern Saudi Arabian royal family who now number several thousand but are all descendants of Ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud (1880–1953) and his brother Faisal (1906–1975). Both monarchs had hundreds of official wives and an unknown but large number of concubines. The Saudi example may, admittedly, be exceptional, but it is nevertheless a simple fact of arithmetic that where individual men number their wives in tens, their offspring may number hundreds by the end of their lives, and where they have wives by the hundred there is nothing to stop them having offspring numbered in thousands. Nor is this effect limited to royalty. In modern Ghana, where men often marry several wives, the average father has twice as many children as the average mother (Konotey-Ahulu 1980). However, the corollary of this is that, given an equitable sex ratio, if some men have more women, other men are going to have fewer, or none. To put the matter in technical terms, the essential point is that males typically have greater *variance* of reproductive success than females normally do.

Sociological writers often take the sex ratio for granted, assuming that a more or less equal number of males to females in a society is an obvious expression of the essential equality of the sexes, but in the animal world as a whole, sex ratios can vary surprisingly, and accounting for them was another mystery Darwin could not solve, but Fisher could. Essentially, Fisher proved that even in a highly polygynous species where only 1 in 10 males mate, the successful males who do mate are 10 times more rewarding to parental resources invested in them, thereby compensating parents for investing equally in each sex (Fisher 1999). But the assumption is that parents have no way of knowing which of their offspring will be the successful ones. Trivers and Willard showed that if parents had some indication of the likely reproductive success of their offspring, they should invest preferentially in males if

their reproductive outlook was favorable but in females if not. The reason is that in all mating systems, females usually get mated, but where males compete—and they usually do—only the successful are likely to mate (Trivers and Willard 1973). In numerous animal species, the Trivers-Willard effect as it is known has been documented, and there are also some remarkable human parallels. One of the most horrifying was the finding that, following relatively expensive prenatal sex-determination tests in modern India (amniocentesis) by parents wealthy enough to be able to afford it, 430 of 450 women carrying a female fetus (95.5 percent) had it aborted, whereas every 1 of 250 carrying a son went to term, despite some being diagnosed defective (Ramanamma and Bambawale 1980). Indeed, historical studies show that some Rajput warrior castes in nineteenth-century India had no females whatsoever (Dickemann 1979)!

A common sociological reaction to such findings is to invoke purely cultural and economic factors, such as the desirability of receiving dowries. No one doubts for one moment that such explanations have their place, but the point is that such cultural, proximate mechanisms nevertheless seem to fit the larger, natural picture. Indeed, sometimes findings directly contradict sociological expectations, as in the case of eighteenth to nineteenth-century Schleswig-Holstein, where a study of a socially stratified farming community found that 7 percent of both girls in farmers' families at the top of the social scale and 7 percent of boys in laborers' families at the bottom died in their first year of life—suggesting that affluence was not a factor in child survival. However, the corresponding figure for their opposite-sex siblings was almost exactly 4 percent in each case, suggesting that irrespective of living conditions, the wealthiest members of the populations preserved more sons, and the poorest, more daughters, just as the Trivers-Willard principle would predict (Volland 1988). Again, a study of 1,314 Mormon women married to men born between 1821 and 1834 in Utah showed that those married to the highest-status men as defined by the church hierarchy had significantly more males (Mealey and Mackey 1990). In traditional American Indian society, high-status Cheyenne “peace bands” had more males than low status “war bands” (Cronk 1993), and in the modern United States, a study of 906 mothers found them more likely to nurse daughters in low-income households and sons in high-income ones. As the authors of the latter study conclude, “No simple model of sexist behavior can explain these findings” (Gaulin and Robbins 1991:69).

## **SOCIOBIOLOGY, EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY, AND THE FUTURE**

Of course, such findings raise the issue, not only of ultimate causes but also of proximate ones. In other words, quite apart from the fundamental biological principles involved in issues such as sex and parental investment,

there is the question of exactly how human beings have evolved to act in ways that may—or may not—put them into effect. More recently, so-called evolutionary psychology has emerged as a “kinder and gentler” variant of sociobiology in which particular emphasis is placed on the issue of proximate cause (Janicki 2004). A principal assumption of evolutionary psychology is that, to the extent that human behavior is controlled by human minds, such minds can be seen as having evolved to facilitate selected behavior (Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby 1992). Where sexual selection is concerned, there is certainly a great deal of evidence now that patterns of human mating preferences found throughout the world accord with basic principles of evolutionary biology.

The largest study ever undertaken of human mating preferences covered all major religious, racial, and ethnic groups in 37 samples drawn from 33 countries and surveyed 10,047 people in all. It found that in 36 out of the 37 samples, women place roughly twice as much value as men do on good financial prospects in a partner (Buss 1997). In a comment that epitomizes the approach of evolutionary psychology, David Buss (1994), who carried out this research, explains the finding as follows: “Because ancestral women faced the tremendous burdens of internal fertilization, a nine-month gestation, and lactation, they would have benefited tremendously by selecting mates who possessed resources.” He adds that “these preferences helped our ancestral mothers solve the adaptive problems of survival and reproduction” (p. 25).

Indeed, predicted sex differences are also found in sexual fantasy. A survey concludes that male sexual fantasies tend to be more ubiquitous, frequent, visual, specifically sexual, promiscuous, and active. Female sexual fantasies tend to be more contextual, emotive, intimate, and passive—just as theory would predict (Ellis and Symons 1990). Again, because paternity is much less certain than maternity, but can still be critical to a man's reproductive success, men should be more concerned with the biological details of insemination than women, who should instead be more concerned with a man's level of emotional commitment. This difference is reflected in jealousy, where men are much more disturbed by the physical details of their partner's activity with another male than are women in the corresponding situation. Women, by contrast, are much more disturbed by the emotional dimension of infidelity and its implications about their partner's feelings for them (Daly, Wilson, and Weghorst 1982).

A standard riposte by sociologists is to dismiss most such findings as simply the result of differential socialization of the sexes, but there is now overwhelming evidence for important innate sex differences in the one area that sociologists cannot afford to ignore: social behavior. From birth, girls attend more to social stimuli, such as faces and voices, while boys attend more to nonsocial, spatial stimuli, such as mobiles (Pierce et al. 2001). Studies conclude that contrary to the beliefs of many sociologists, there is little consistency between child-rearing practices and adult

outcomes, and that parents' attitudes about sex stereotypes are poor predictors of their children's sex-typed behaviors. Others find that gender stereotypes are robust over cultures, show little change over time, and are reasonably accurate (Campbell 1998). Anne Campbell (1999) concludes that

girls are more concerned with developing shared norms and cohesion within the group and more frequently resolve conflict through discussion than do boys . . . evidence from both children and adults suggests that females are less competitive than males, show less . . . hierarchical organization, are less interested in achieving leadership within the group, and are more concerned with maintaining relationships of mutuality and reciprocity. (Pp. 208–209)

Women are found to exceed men in facial expressiveness, interpretative skill, gazing, smiling, and expressiveness of body language (Hall 1984). Meta-analysis of numerous studies shows that women exceed men on measures of anxiety, trust, tender-mindedness, and gregariousness, whereas men exceed women on assertiveness. Furthermore, these differences are invariant across ages, educational levels, and nations (Feingold 1994). According to another meta-analysis, men are more aggressive and restless, are more likely to lead groups, and to contribute more in small groups. Women, on the other hand, make greater social and emotional contributions to small groups and are more easily influenced by them (Eagly 1987).

One of the most robust findings is that males take more risks than females in almost every species where males compete for reproductive success. As a consequence, it has been claimed that

because of women's greater involvement in childbearing . . . it would have been to their selective advantage to inhibit behaviors that would conflict with the best interests of children . . . The single interpretation that best describes the research findings across a wide range of tasks is that women have greater inhibitory abilities than men on most tasks involving sexual, social, emotional and some behavioral content. (Bjorklund and Kipp 1996:167)

However, "because the male psyche is biased towards risk taking, the number of situations in which men demonstrate consistently superior inhibitory abilities to women will be few" (p. 168). For example, a study of Israeli kibbutzniks found that even after three generations of socialization aimed at eliminating sex differences in behavior, males still took more risks than females. The only exception was in defense of their own children, where women were more likely to endanger themselves than men (Lampert and Yassour 1992). Indeed, these findings have even persuaded some sociologists of religion that they explain the universal tendency for women to be more religious than men much better than sociology's stock-in-trade explanation of differential socialization (Miller and Stark 2002; Stark 2002).

Nevertheless, violence represents the starkest difference between the sexes in social behavior and is one that, even more than religious behavior, simply cannot be accounted for by differences in socialization. For example, a study of 35 societies throughout the world showed that a man was 20 times more likely to be murdered by another man than was a woman by a woman (despite excluding war and other group conflicts). Men in the United States commit 86 percent of simple assaults, 87 percent of aggravated assaults, and 88 percent of murders. Indeed, "*Intra-sexual competition is far more violent among men than among women in every human society for which information exists*" (Daly and Wilson 1988:161, authors' emphasis). According to a recent account,

these differences are understandable if, in evolutionary history, women have enhanced their reproductive success by cooperating in the familial sphere, with female relatives and co-wives—that is, in situations in which they could not gain through open conflict, or in attempting to change coalitions. Men, on the other hand, have enhanced their reproductive success by cooperating to get greater resources and power with both related and unrelated men—situations in which open assertions of dominance (with greater risk) may frequently gain. (Low 2000:196–197)

Reduced temporo-limbic and frontal brain areas have been found to be linked with psychopathy and antisocial behavior, but these same parts of the brain have recently been found to be larger in women (Gur, Gunning-Dixon, Bilker, and Gur 2002). As one authority comments, "This study affords us neurobiological evidence that women may have a better brain capacity than men for actually censoring their aggressive and anger responses" (Cohen 2002:7).

Evolutionary psychologists have criticized what they call the *Standard Social Science Model* for its exclusion of insights from biology (Tooby and Cosmides 1992), and sociologists such as Lee Ellis have castigated sociology for its so-called biophobia (Ellis 1996). Indeed, according to Lopreato and Crippen (1999), "Sociology will never get anywhere but farther out of the scientific course as long as it adheres to the banality that the fundamental cause of behavior resides exclusively in the immediate influence of culture and social structure." They add that "at present sociology offers a shallow and distorted view of human nature that prevents it from understanding the real world and thus from the likelihood of demonstrating its utility to society" (pp. 34, 43).

Part of the reason for sociology's phobic reaction to sociobiology and evolutionary psychology may be fear of so-called genetic determinism. This is specially so in relation to issues such as sex, which sociologists prefer to call *gender* (perhaps because, strictly speaking, whereas there are just two sexes, male and female, there are three genders, masculine, feminine, and neuter). But, notwithstanding the universally agreed definition of the sexes in terms of parental investment outlined above, it is important to realize that sociobiological insights (again springing

mainly from the work of Hamilton) suggest not simple genetic determinism but complex genetic conflict where sex is concerned, with every possible variation and mixture of maleness and femaleness being predictable.

The reason for this is that the male-defining Y chromosome in mammals such as human beings contains very few genes, meaning that the vast majority that are characteristically expressed in males are carried on the remaining 22 pairs of chromosomes, also present in females. This means that masculinization of female mammals can readily occur in a way in which it never could if all male-defining genes were carried on the Y, which is present only in males. Female mammals have two X sex chromosomes, by contrast to the male's single one (paired with the Y in males). But as Hamilton was one of the first to point out, this means that any gene on an X finds itself in a female body twice as often as in a male, meaning that selection will act on X chromosome genes to benefit females twice as much as it will to benefit males (Hamilton 1967). As a result, males might be feminized—or at least, their masculinity compromised by selection pressure favoring their female relatives. For example, a gene on the X chromosome called *DAX1* acts as an antagonist to the gene on the Y that initiates male development. Normally, this gene, *SRY* (for *Sex-determining Region of the Y*) transforms what would otherwise develop as ovaries into testes, with subsequent masculinization of the whole body (largely thanks to the male sex hormones produced by the testes). However, otherwise normal XY males with a duplication of part of the short arm of the X chromosome that contains *DAX1* show male-to-female sex reversal. It seems likely that the dose of *DAX1* carried on a normal male's single X chromosome is not enough to reverse male development, but a double dose provided by duplication of the *DAX1* region of the X chromosome is, and so sex reversal occurs. At the very least, this finding shows that particular genes on the X and Y chromosomes can be in conflict with one another. Indeed, *DAX1* has been described as more of an “anti-testis gene” than a “pro-ovary” gene (Swain et al. 1998).

Again, recent research has revealed that although each parent contributes half the offspring's genes, certain key genes are only expressed when inherited from one parent rather than the other. The paradigmatic example is *Igf2*, which codes for a growth factor. Normally *Igf2* is only expressed from the paternal copy, and in human beings, expression of the mother's copy too results in Beckwith-Wiedemann syndrome, an overgrowth condition with many symptoms, among which is birth weight more than one and half times normal (Reik and Maher 1997). Larger size is normally advantageous to mammals, and in the case of human beings, larger babies live longer, suffer less disease, and have better all-round health; while coronary heart disease, stroke, and non-insulin-dependent diabetes are associated with low birth weight (Barker 1998). Taller men do better in most occupations, are preferred by women, and have more sexual partners and children than shorter ones (Pawlowski, Dunbar, and Lipowicz 2000). So

size definitely benefits a man's genes invested in his children (particularly if they are male), but as any woman who has ever been pregnant knows, larger babies also impose greater costs on the mother, and without recourse to Caesarean delivery, many Beckwith-Wiedemann babies in the past killed their mothers during childbirth simply because they were so large. This may explain why *Igf2* is paternally active and why *Igf2r* is maternally active: the latter being a gene that (at least in mice) creates receptors that act as a sink for the growth factor and reduce offspring size (Moore and Haig 1991). In other words, it looks as if *Igf2* serves the father's interests in promoting growth of his offspring, but that *Igf2r* represents the mother's point of view and tones down its effects to something more manageable for her. In maize, for example, paternal genes are associated with larger kernel size, whereas maternal genes produce smaller kernels (Domínguez 1995).

Maternity is certain: A woman always knows that half her genes are present in any child that issues from her body. But paternity is uncertain in the sense that fathers normally have no direct way of knowing whether it was one of their sperms or that of another man which fertilized a particular egg. Of course, life-time monogamy, virginity on marriage, and strict observation of sexual fidelity can lessen the uncertainty of paternity, but in most mammalian species—and in most human societies throughout most of history, not to mention the modern world—these ideals are seldom found. On the contrary, in the modern Western world, estimates of the extent to which a man who believes he is the father of a child is in fact not so vary between 1 and 30 percent (Baker and Bellis 1995; Heyer et al. 1997; Sasse et al. 1994; Wenk et al. 1992). In plants, a grain of pollen could come from practically any other plant within range of the one that it fertilizes, and so here even more than in mammals, complete uncertainty of paternity is the rule. The result is that paternal genes do not have the same vested interest in not exploiting the mother that maternal ones have. A woman's genes rely entirely on her own body to produce offspring once she is fertilized, so they have an interest in conserving her resources and protecting her future reproductive potential. However, a man can in principle count on the gestational services of as many women as he can successfully inseminate, and unless he is tied to one by lifelong monogamy, can regard his mates' reproductive potential as much more expendable than his own.

In humans, mainly paternal genes are expressed in the *placenta*: an organ designed primarily to extract resources for the growth and development of a fetus from its mother. Indeed, an abnormal conceptus with a double set of paternal genes without any genes whatsoever from the mother results in a massive proliferation of the placenta without any associated fetus (Newton 2001). The human placenta is the most invasive of all mammalian placentas and in some cases can perforate the uterus, killing the mother. The fact that anemic mothers have heavier placentas than nonanemic ones despite giving birth to lower-weight babies suggests that the placenta can actively respond to

deficits in the mother's provision of nutrients by becoming larger. Cells originating in the placenta aggressively widen the mother's arteries that feed it by breaking down their walls and weakening them, so that they sag and distend, thereby increasing blood supply to the cavities that the placenta excavates to receive it. A paternally active gene within the fetus/placenta manipulates the mother's glucose economy by secreting *human placental lactogen*, a hormone that reduces the mother's sensitivity to her own insulin, causing the so-called gestational diabetes. This means that the mother's blood sugar level stays higher for longer, giving the fetus more time to consume glucose despite the mother's best efforts to prevent this by escalating her output of insulin. There is also evidence that the fetus heightens maternal blood pressure to decrease blood flow to the mother's peripheral circulation and to increase it to the placenta. Blood pressure in mothers appears to correlate with birth weight in both directions: Women with lower than normal blood pressure during pregnancy tend to have lighter babies, and those with hypertension probably have heavier ones than they would otherwise. In any event, women with higher blood pressure tend to lose fewer babies than average (Haig 1993).

Furthermore, conflict between maternal and paternal genes can continue after birth. *Prader-Willi syndrome* affects about 1 in 15,000 births, and is caused by the loss or silencing of paternal genes on chromosome 15 through inheriting both copies of this chromosome from the mother, or losing part of the paternal copy (Nicholls, Saitoh, and Horsthemke 1998). Symptoms include lack of appetite, poor suckling ability, a weak cry, inactivity and sleepiness, high pain threshold, and reduced tendency to vomit (Franke, Kerns, and Giacalone 1995)—all features that, interestingly enough, could be seen as benefiting the mother by making the baby less demanding on her resources (Haig 1997, 2000; Moore and Haig 1991). By contrast to Prader-Willi, in *Angelman syndrome* only the paternal chromosome 15 is present in its entirety and the critical maternal genes involved in Prader-Willi syndrome are missing (Nicholls et al. 1998). Symptoms include prolonged suckling, hyperactivity, and frequent waking—every mother's worst fear—and according to the conflict theory not coincidentally associated with paternally expressed genes (Badcock 2000:192–226)!

It is now possible to produce mice in the laboratory that express mainly the father's or the mother's genes and to stain cells in such a way that you can see exactly where the paternal or maternal genes are going in the developing body. The result is striking: Fetal mice with a father but no mother are larger than normal and have a bigger placenta but reduced brains; those with a mother and no father are the opposite—they are smaller than usual, have reduced placentas, but have larger brains than normal (Keverne et al. 1996). Of course, you could not carry out such an experiment on human fetuses, but naturally occurring human equivalents mirror these findings. Abnormal human

fetuses with a double set of their father's genes and a single set of the mother's (rather than a single set from each parent) are well grown except for the head and have a large placenta. By contrast, those with a double set of the mother's genes and one of the father's are small except for the head, show a retardation of growth, and have small placentas (Hannah et al. 2002; Newton 2001).

In mice, cells with only maternal genes are found in large numbers in the cerebral cortex and forebrain but very few are found in the lower brain, and especially the *hypothalamus*, a center concerned with basic drives and instincts. This is true both of mature, fully grown mice but even more so of fetuses, where there is a complete absence of maternal cells from the hypothalamus. In both cases, mother-only cells are found to be particularly clustered in the frontal lobes of the cortex. Father-only cells, by contrast, are the exact opposite: These are found in the hypothalamus and lower brain but not in the cerebral cortex. The few that are found in the forebrain tissue of embryos do not proliferate and are subsequently eliminated. However, no such difference is found in the brain stem, which appears to be equally the work of maternal and paternal genes (Allen et al. 1995).

As I pointed out earlier, *Igf2r* is the classic maternally active gene found in mice, effectively contradicting the growth-enhancing demands of *Igf2*. However, in humans, *Igf2R* has been found to be associated with high IQ (Chorney et al. 1998). As the authors of the study in question point out, the fact that *Igf2R* has been found to be statistically associated with high IQ in their sample does not mean that the gene is in fact contributing to intelligence. What they have found may simply be a genetic marker that is close to other genes that do directly contribute to measures of IQ. To this extent, the finding may be coincidental. However, there is evidence that insulin may play a role in spurring neuronal growth that contributes to learning and memory in the brain (Wickelgren 1998), and we have already seen that in mice *Igf2r* builds an insulin-like growth hormone receptor. So it is not entirely far fetched to think that the human version of the gene has become associated with mental functioning in the very parts of the brain built by maternal rather than paternal genes.

As the principal provider of parental investment during pregnancy and breast-feeding and almost always during childhood, a mother clearly has a vested interest, both in nurturing her child and enabling it to control its demands for further investment in her own and her other children's self-interest. The father, however, need make no biologically obligatory contribution beyond his single sperm, and so perhaps understandably relies on his genes alone and the lower brain centers they evidently build to motivate his offspring to compete for resources within a family where other children may not be related to him at all. Genetic conflict, in other words, appears to be built into the brain before birth and fought out in the mind for ever afterward (Badcock 2000:204–222, 2004).

As Hamilton (1996) himself confessed,

The genome wasn't the monolithic data bank plus executive team devoted to one project—keeping oneself alive, having babies—that I had hitherto imagined it to be. Instead, it was beginning to seem more a company boardroom, a theatre for a power struggle of egoists and factions. Emergent from the potential strife I was having to imagine, in parallel with others, a kind of parliament of the genes, and the signs suggested a rowdy parliament at that. (Pp. 133–134)

The fundamental insight of sociobiology, in other words, is not genetic determinism, but genetic conflict, not

robotic control by all-powerful genes, but ambivalence about how to respond to contrary wishes and mutually exclusive motivations. This in turn suggests that human beings evolved their enormous brains in large part to be able to arbitrate such internal conflicts and to make the difficult choices that result. Sociobiology is an attempt to understand how and why this extraordinary situation could have come about. Ultimately, its value lies in the extent to which it can help us make sense of our own selves and thereby perhaps even master the evolved basis of our own behavior (Badcock 2000:69–71).

## TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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Throughout time, humanity has grappled with questions of how to survive and, in so doing, to meet the needs for basics such as food and shelter. Historically, humankind has used technology to assist in the pursuit of these survival basics. Researchers examining society from a comparative and historical perspective note that as subsistence technology has developed—for example, from the digging stick to the plow to the steam engine—so have there been profound changes in the ways societies themselves are organized (e.g., Lenski 1966; Lenski and Nolan 1984).

With the advance in technology, societies are able to acquire and produce more food and to accumulate surpluses. This leads to a number of profound changes in social and ecological processes, including changes in the numbers of people living in a society, and, more generally, on the planet, and in the patterns of accumulation and distribution of resources among those people. Furthermore, as technology allows for deeper incursions into the earth, the potential for environmental impact increases dramatically (Ponting 1991; McNeill 2000).

Because of the profound implications for the well-being, and perhaps even the long-term survival, of humanity, questions about interactions of social arrangements among human beings, the technologies they produce, and their impacts on the natural environment are vitally important to sociologists. Yet by their very nature, these

questions involve a number of aspects, and as such, their study typically has been interdisciplinary. The study of social-technological-environmental interactions, by its very nature, draws on a number of subfields. We now turn to some of the attempts to bring social scientific analysis to these questions.

### EARLY WORK LINKING TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT WITH HUMAN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Some of the early attempts to examine these interrelationships were undertaken by sociologists, but with a heavy influence of other disciplines, most notably biology. These came to be known under a broad rubric of *human ecology* (e.g., Duncan 1964; Commoner 1971, 1992; Catton 1980, 1994; Catton and Dunlap 1978; Hawley 1981).

Human ecologists developed a framework that came to be known as the *POET* model, so named because of the acronym formed by the four major variables: *population* (human social), *organization*, *environment*, and *technology*. While this model served as a useful way to focus discussions about human-environmental interactions, it was not particularly influential in guiding empirical research. One of the chief criticisms spoke to the ecological nature

of the model itself, in that it did not specify an outcome and did not make specific predictions (for an in-depth discussion, see Dietz and Rosa 1994).

As sociologists and others came to recognize the limitations of the POET model, it was modified by a number of researchers around several emerging themes. A series of arguments were advanced that a set of models should be specified that could predict environmental impacts, such as deforestation, greenhouse gas emissions, and air and water pollution. As a very general way of conceptualizing the problem, environmental impact was seen as being a function of population, technology, and human consumption levels (which came to be referred to in many of the models as “affluence” because of the high correlation in many societies between levels of wealth and patterns of consumption). They presented the *IPAT* model, in which (Environmental) *Impact* = *Population* \* *Affluence* \* *Technology* (Ehrlich 1968; Commoner 1971, 1992; Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1981, 1990; Dietz and Rosa 1994).

Each of the four terms can be defined in a number of ways, and as such, the IPAT model should be seen as a general framework rather than a specific predictor (Dietz and Rosa 1994). For example, while some of the same social factors that are linked with an environmental impact, such as greenhouse gas emissions, can also be used to predict deforestation, there are important differences as well. While population dynamics are important to consider in predicting environmental impact, specifics about population distributions are often more informative than overall levels of population. Studies, for example, show that rural population growth is much more closely associated with deforestation, while urban population growth is more closely associated with greenhouse gas emissions and levels of resource consumption (Burns, Kick, and Davis 1997, 2003).

Furthermore, the social factors most closely associated with what predicts one greenhouse gas (carbon dioxide) differ in important ways from those predicting another greenhouse gas (methane) (Burns et al. 1994; Burns, Kick, and Davis 1997; Jorgenson 2006). Much of the work has followed in this vein, and in a notable variant, researchers have reformulated the IPAT approach into the STIRPAT model, an acronym for STochastic Impacts by Regression on Population, Affluence, and Technology (e.g., York, Rosa, and Dietz 2003). While all the specifics of these processes are beyond the purview of this entry, it is nonetheless important to realize that such distinctions as to the scope of precise causes of particular environmental impacts are important for researchers and policy-makers to consider. Attention to such detail can often lead to insight about why there are findings that may be characterized as “conflicting” in the popular press. It is thus important to give detailed attention to each of the respective areas of the overall framework, as well as to the overall picture.

## IMPACT: CONSIDERING HUMANITY'S EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

### Water Pollution

In developing countries, approximately 90 percent of human sewage is simply dumped without any attempt at treatment whatsoever (World Resources Institute 1996:71). These discharges often go directly into water; yet even when the dumping is not direct, it often leaches into underground aquifers. Either way, this causes serious pollution problems and the public health risks associated with them. While adequate supplies of safe drinking water become more imperiled worldwide, it is a particularly acute problem in parts of the developing world where population growth is outstripping the local resources. By the most reliable estimates, for instance, by the year 2025, at least a billion people in northern Africa and the Middle East will lack water for basic necessities like drinking and sustaining their crops (Postel 1993).

Runoff of water contaminated by short-sighted farming practices, such as indiscriminate use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, as well as from concentrations of livestock animal waste from huge feed lots leads to a number of ecological and health problems, particularly for those living downstream from them (Steingraber 1998; Burns, Kentor, and Jorgenson 2003).

### Soil Erosion, Depletion, and Unsustainable Agriculture

On average, farmland in the United States now has only about two-thirds as much topsoil as it did at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Pimentel et al. 1995). This is directly attributable to poor land management practices, such as raising one crop over large stretches of land (monocrop agriculture) and the extensive use of tractor plows and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Typically, this leads to a situation in which soil is either blown away by wind or washed away by rain or by irrigation. Only on about 10 percent of U.S. farmland is soil being replaced as fast as it is being eroded, typically through the slow but rich process of naturally breaking down organic matter (Pimentel et al. 1995).

Historically, societies expanded their food production by increasing the amount of land dedicated to farming and grazing. This worked well as long as there was fertile soil that could be brought under cultivation. However, these increases are necessarily bound by the amount of total land available to a society, and ultimately by the size of the planet. Over time, only less fertile land was available, and people increasingly began to attempt cultivating land that needed something beyond what was available through the natural environment to produce food.

As Rachel Carson noted as early as 1962 in her landmark work *The Silent Spring*, a number of chemicals the U.S. Army developed under wartime conditions during



World War II became generally available to farmers at the end of that war. These included herbicides and pesticides such as DDT, as well as synthetic fertilizers. Already by the 1950s, these had come into widespread use, particularly in developed countries (Brown, Flavin, and Kane 1992).

Since about 1980, the amount of land dedicated to farming has actually been *decreasing* for the first time in history; this trend is particularly strong in developed countries (Pimentel 1992). While it is true that greater amounts of food can be produced in the short run by the use of monoagriculture, pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers, in the longer run, this leads to soil erosion and degradation.

### Declining Biodiversity

The earth and its subregions are in a delicate ecological balance. Loss of a species leads to a number of problems, not the least of which is that the fragile balance often gets upset, sometimes leading to catastrophic results (Ryan 1992). For example, in the 1920s the people in Kern County, California, decided to eliminate threats to their crops and livestock. They killed every such threat they could find—skunks, coyotes, snakes, foxes, and beavers. For their efforts, they were repaid by being overrun by millions upon millions of mice, in what was (at least to date) the worst rodent infestation in U.S. history (Maize 1977, cited in Eisenberg 1998).

By some estimates, anywhere from 15 to 75 species in tropical rainforests go extinct on an average day (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1981; Wilson 1990, 1992). Yet many of the “miracle drug” cures come from plants (many of them teetering on the edge of extinction) in those very rainforests (Soejarto and Farnsworth 1989).

### Deforestation

The major social causes of deforestation involve population dynamics, the level and growth of economic development, and the structure of international trade (e.g., Rudel 1989; Kick et al. 1996; Lofdahl 2002; Burns, Kick, et al. 2003). However, changing technologies greatly affect all three of these major causes in different ways, meaning that technology affects deforestation indirectly and has done so throughout human history (e.g., Chew 2001; Diamond 2005).

The effects of population are often addressed in the context of urban population growth and rural population growth. For example, rural population growth increases the likelihood that forested regions will be transformed, cut, or burned for use in industrial activities, extractive processes, or agricultural production, and related technological developments only exacerbate the environmental impacts of these activities (Rudel 1989; Burns et al. 1994; Rudel and Roper 1997).

Rudel (1989) and Ehrhardt-Martinez (1998) argue that economic development in less developed countries

will increase deforestation by expanding the availability of capital for productive ventures in extractive industries and agriculture (for further discussion, see Marquart-Pyatt 2004). Conversely, Burns, Kick, et al. (2003) find that the least developed countries experience the highest rates of deforestation, followed by middle-developed countries, and highly developed ones sometimes experience attempts at reforestation. This pattern can be attributed, at least in part, to a process of *recursive exploitation*, in which environmental resources of the least developed countries are acquired at a discount by entrepreneurs and corporate actors from both highly developed and developing nations, while the resources of developing countries accrue primarily to actors in highly developed countries (e.g., Burns, Kick, et al. 2003, 2006; Burns, Kick, and Davis 2006).

In a related vein, higher-consuming countries partially externalize their consumption-based environmental costs to less developed countries, which increases deforestation within the latter (see also Jorgenson and Rice 2005). This externalization largely takes the form of the flow of raw materials and produced commodities from less developed to more developed countries, and technological developments in extractive and productive sectors as well as transport (e.g., shipping) intensify the environmental degradation associated with these asymmetrical international exchanges (e.g., Bunker 1984; Jorgenson and Rice 2005).

### Global Warming

The human dimensions of climate change and global warming are perhaps the most widely addressed human-environment relationships in the social sciences and policy venues. There is general consensus in the scientific community that global warming is indeed a reality and that human societies do contribute to the warming of the earth's atmosphere through activities that lead to the emission of noxious greenhouse gases (National Research Council 1999). Atmospheric greenhouse gases absorb and reradiate infrared energy and heat back to the earth's surface, which increases water, land, and air temperatures in the biosphere (Christianson 1999).

Two of the most serious greenhouse causing gases emitted into the atmosphere as a by-product of human activity are carbon dioxide and methane. In terms of scale, carbon dioxide accounts for the largest volume of greenhouse gas caused by humans; molecule for molecule, methane is an order of magnitude more effective at absorbing and reradiating infrared energy and heat back to the earth's surface. The primary human activity contributing to carbon dioxide emissions is the use of fossil fuels. Methane emissions are increased by the refining of fossil fuels as well as through increased cattle production and large-scale agriculture activities, particularly the growing of rice (Jorgenson 2006).

## CONSIDERING THE PRIMARY HUMAN CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

### Technology

With technological development comes the ability to dig deeper, to go farther into the earth, oceans, and space. While this allows people to produce more food, clothing, shelter, and luxury items, it also makes greater demands on the world's resources and dramatically increases the accumulation of waste products.

Some analysts argue that the earth is robust enough to cope with waste products and will regenerate itself (e.g., Simon 1983, 1990; Simon and Kahn 1984; for counterarguments, see Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1981, 1990). While almost anything will be broken down and recycled by the natural environment, the question of how long this will take is crucial. For example, a single glass bottle can be broken down, but the process takes about 10,000 years. The use of technology in allowing people to extract resources and then to use them in increasingly exotic combinations has the potential to lead society to the point where the earth will not be able to regenerate itself in time for the human race to live and use technology in the way it does (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1981).

Technology is most readily available in core societies, but it is also becoming increasingly widespread throughout the world, especially in rapidly developing countries. It is true, however, that if environmental regulation is promulgated at all, it tends to be done primarily in the high-consuming, developed societies. Thus, the developing societies often have a combination of technology with a lack of concomitant regulation. The result is that the developing societies are often places with some of the worst ecological degradation.

The former U.S. Vice President Gore (1993), for example, gives a tragic illustration of some of the social dynamics behind the Aral Sea drying up—a sea that had been the fourth largest landlocked body of water in the world and that had provided a livelihood for thousands of people. A number of factors contributed to this, not the least of which was an irrigation system that had been used to grow cotton in an otherwise desert climate. The cotton was grown originally for economic reasons—it could draw a better price on the world market than virtually anything else that could be grown there, but only in the short run. In the long run, the diversion of water effectively changed the hydrological cycle in that area. Once the hydrological cycle is changed, it is often changed permanently.

In this case, the technology was sophisticated enough to change the natural ecology in a dramatic way. This was done as a short-term response to economic pressures for survival in an increasingly competitive world. There was another component to the problem as well: With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Aral Sea was no longer entirely in one state (it was in a part of two

contiguous newly created states, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan). The technological sophistication was not matched by environmental regulation.

If technology can be used to destroy the earth, could it also be used to help repair it? There are a number of beneficial uses of technology, and certainly, technological development can, if done with its environmental consequences in mind, harness some of those benefits. Ecologically sound energy sources, such as solar and wind power, are not currently in a state of development that enables them to compete with fossil fuels under current market conditions. However, with more research, it may well be that these ecologically sound energy sources become generally available.

Some theorists, most notably Julian Simon and his collaborators (e.g., Simon 1983, 1990; Simon and Kahn 1984), hold that technological development will help to alleviate society's most pressing problems. Most notably, Simon believes that environmental problems will, given enough technology, be overcome. In fact, Simon and his collaborators criticize Malthus ([1798] 1960) and his followers as well. Simon believes that increasing population size will lead to increasing levels of human interaction and, thus, the much greater probability that some of those people will develop critically needed technology.

Consider, too, that the internal combustion automobile, one of the greatest polluters of all time, was originally welcomed as a clean alternative to the pollution caused by horses in city streets. There is an important lesson here. Human actions, including the production and use of technological innovation, almost always have unforeseen or unintended consequences. Nobody develops a technology deliberately to pollute, yet pollution is often a consequence of technology. This is not to say that society should cease trying to develop technologically. Rather, we would do well to approach technology with enough humility to recognize that we cannot always control the outcome and that continually relying on technology to solve environmental problems may be flirting with disaster.

### Population

As of the beginning of the third millennium, there are over 6 billion people in the world, and that number is rising rapidly. Most of the very rapid population increases have taken place since the advent of the industrial revolution and the technological advances associated with it. Consider that the world population mark surpassed only 1 billion in about 1850 AD. According to United Nations projections, by the year 2025, that number will be up to 8 billion (United Nations Population Division 1995).

Over two centuries ago, Thomas Malthus ([1798] 1960) noted that the technological progress associated with the beginning of the industrial revolution had a number of consequences for the human race. Malthus thought that with the increasing capacity of production, there would be a tendency for population to increase dramatically. While

Malthus saw the ability of society to produce the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, and shelter, as increasing linearly (what he termed “arithmetically”), this would lead people to have many more children, and so the population would increase exponentially (what Malthus termed “geometrically”). The mismatch between the modest growth in the ability to produce resources and the tremendous growth in the size of the population would eventually lead to “overpopulation”; this term that Malthus coined—*overpopulation*—has been part of human dialogue ever since.

More specifically, Malthus argued that overpopulation and the problems associated with it, such as severe crowding and competition for scarce resources, would eventually lead to serious social problems. Recalling the Apocalypse, or the last book of the Bible, Malthus theorized that overpopulation would lead to its own “four horsemen” of the apocalypse. For Malthus, the four horsemen were war, famine, plague, and pestilence. Malthus has inspired a number of modern-day thinkers, who also see population growth as the central cause of a plethora of social and environmental problems (e.g., Ehrlich 1968; Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1990; Abernethy 1991; Bongaarts 1994; Pimentel et al. 1994; Cohen 1995; see also United Nations Population Fund 1991, 1997, 1999).

While absolute size of the population is crucial, *distribution* of the population is important as well (Burns et al. 1994; Burns, Kick, and Davis 2006). Dramatic increases in population, particularly in rural areas, often lead to serious environmental degradation in those areas, as people clear previously forested land, for example.

While the world’s population is increasing, and is now over 6 billion people, the greatest population increases are in the least developed countries. Unless resources can be increased (through, e.g., technological advance), the proportion of resources accruing to any given person, especially in the countries that are already the poorest in the world, will likely *decrease* over time.

While no one knows for sure the precise carrying capacity of the planet, there are a number of trade-offs that eventually must be made. One such trade-off, ultimately, may be a quantity/quality one, in which the planet may support, for example, a population of upward of 10 billion people but at a lifestyle greatly diminished from what is currently the case, especially in developed, mass-consumption-oriented societies (Cohen 1995).

Historically, the more developed a society, the greater the *urbanization* of that society. A century ago, for example, virtually all the major cities of the world were in developed countries. Over time, however, particularly in the late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, the rapidly developing countries, such as India and Mexico, have been urbanizing very rapidly. United Nations (1992) projections are that some time in the first half of the twenty-first century, nine of the ten largest cities in the world will be in what world-system theorists would classify as semiperipheral countries.

With urbanization comes the concentration of humanly created waste, which is produced much faster than the time it takes to biodegrade. Hence, a number of environmental problems associated with urbanization will very likely continue to plague the Third World even more in the years to come. However, rural population growth also brings its unique problems. It is often the case that deforestation is precipitated by encroachment into rural areas.

An important idea in ecology is that of *carrying capacity* of the natural environment. Although it was originally conceptualized in terms of animal and plant species, with some important caveats, it applies to human beings as well (Catton 1980, 1994; Cohen 1995). Carrying capacity of an area refers to the number of members of a species that can live in that area. For animals, the area poses natural limits by virtue of the food and shelter available and in terms of the threats to a species’ livelihood through exposure to disease and competition from predators.

With some important caveats, many of the theories that have been developed to describe nonhuman populations can apply to human populations as well. The use of language and other complex symbol systems makes the human case quite distinct, however. Technology is made possible through those complex symbol systems and the accumulation of knowledge that accompanies them. This, in turn, makes it possible to alter the natural environment profoundly. While it is true that every species has an effect on its environment, human beings have, by far, had the most profound effect of all (Lenski 1966; Schnaiberg and Gould 1994).

Human beings can use technology to extend the carrying capacity of a place temporarily. The use of fossil fuel such as gasoline is a good example. Through techniques such as drilling into the earth and refining the crude oil found there, we are able to use energy that was fixed millennia ago. In so doing, we extend the carrying capacity, but we do so only temporarily. The oil itself takes much longer for nature to produce than for us to use it. Ecologists see the temporary extension of carrying capacity through technology as a prime case of overshoot (Catton 1980). However, it is also a principle of ecology that overshoot tends to be followed by some catastrophe that causes severe hardship and death. This condition is often referred to in the literature with the apocalyptic moniker of “crash”; historically, the greater the overshoot, the greater the severity of the eventual crash (Catton 1980; see also Diamond 2005).

## Affluence, Inequality, and Consumption

As we have seen, population growth is related to environmental impact in a number of complex ways (Burns et al. 1998). Ultimately, every individual requires a certain amount of energy to survive. However, the level of *affluence* must be very carefully considered as well. There is a great deal of inequality, both within and among countries, in terms of the level of affluence.

In 1960, the richest 20 percent of the world's population had an income about 30 times that of the world's poorest 20 percent. Within one generation—by 1990—that proportion had doubled to 60—the richest fifth of the world's population had incomes 60 times that of the poorest fifth (United Nations Development Programme 1994). With increasing affluence comes the increasing impact, or size of the “ecological footprint,” a person or a society makes (Jorgenson 2003; York, Rosa, and Dietz 2003).

Closely associated with the question of overall affluence is the question of how unevenly that affluence is distributed. In fact, one of the greatest critics of Thomas Malthus, and his ideas on overpopulation, was Karl Marx. Marx believed that the central human problem was distribution of resources, with a few people living in luxury, while many lived in poor, and increasingly desperate, conditions. While Marx had little to say about the effect of this on the environment (for an attempt to link Marx's work with environmental concerns, see Foster 1999), the implications of his critique of Malthus are broad.

In our increasingly interconnected world, the relationship between production and environmental degradation can be seen in the context of the transnational social organization of agricultural and industrial production. This involves the control of global assembly lines, which largely involves foreign investment, and transnational corporations that are sometimes in partial cooperation with domestic firms. The process operates primarily in the interests of the firms themselves, which are largely headquartered in affluent, higher-consuming countries (Chase-Dunn 1998; Jorgenson 2003).

The findings of recent studies suggest that foreign capital penetration is a mechanism partly responsible for particular forms of environmental degradation, including carbon dioxide emissions, methane emissions, sulfur dioxide emissions, and water pollution intensity (e.g., Grimes and Kentor 2003; Shandra et al. 2004; Jorgenson 2006). It is not unusual for transnational corporations to make investments in less developed countries, which maintain lower environmental standards and policies than those found in the more affluent, high-consumption-oriented societies. A large proportion of foreign investment in less developed countries finances ecologically inefficient, labor- and energy-intensive manufacturing processes outsourced from developed countries. Moreover, power generation in the countries receiving foreign investment is considerably less efficient. This often results in increased emissions of noxious greenhouse gases (Lofdahl 2002).

Indeed, the transnational social organization of production is tied to the flows of natural resources and produced commodities between countries. Like foreign investment, international trade has become an increasingly salient issue in environmental sociology and other environmental social sciences (Lofdahl 2002; Jorgenson and Kick 2006). For example, the amount of resources a country consumes is largely a function of its level of economic development (Jorgenson 2003).

Paradoxically, nations with higher levels of resource consumption experience lower levels of environmental degradation within their borders, including deforestation and organic water pollution (Jorgenson 2003; Jorgenson and Burns 2004). International trade practices at least partially account for this paradox (e.g., Hornborg 2001; Jorgenson 2004). International trade blurs human responsibility for the environmental effects of production and consumption (e.g., Rothman 1998; Andersson and Lindroth 2001; Lofdahl 2002). Developed countries possess the international political and economic power and institutional infrastructure to achieve improvements in domestic environmental conditions while continuing to impose negative externalities (e.g., Chase-Dunn 1998; Foster 1999; Princen, Maniates, and Conca 2002).

More broadly speaking, there often is a mismatch between the logic of economics and that of ecology; while it makes sense economically to have large-scale production with many concentrations of specialized parts of the overall process around the globe, this tends to be damaging ecologically. Natural ecology works much better on a smaller scale, where waste and other by-products can be naturally recycled (Freudenburg 1990) and where production and consumption practices are more closely coupled (Foster 1999).

## LOOKING AHEAD AS SOCIETY MOVES THROUGH THE 21ST CENTURY

As we can see from the above discussion, there are numerous ways in which population processes, technology, and consumption patterns are intertwined. As a result, their influences on the environment alone and in combination are complex. Yet it is essential for social and natural scientists to continue to grapple with understanding these complexities. There is little doubt that many of the problems discussed in this chapter will get worse before they improve. Any progress that is to be made is likely to involve taking environmental problems seriously while at the same time moving the focus beyond any one single causative factor.

The specific contributory mechanisms most closely associated with environmental outcomes tend to differ by level of development of a country or region. Population processes are certainly linked with environmental outcomes, yet the level of resource consumption of a population, itself largely a function of affluence and the ways in which technologies are used, is a significant factor in environmental impact as well. Consider, for example, that per capita energy usage in the United States is over 50 times as much as in some Third World locales. Thus, although it is true that population increases have environmental consequences, it is shortsighted to stop at that observation. The ways in which populations use resources are profoundly important as well, and it is crucial to consider these factors in conjunction with one another if we are to obtain anything beyond the most simplistic of views.

That said, by virtually all projections, population will multiply significantly through at least the first half of the twenty-first century, with the most significant increases occurring in developing countries. As the human population increases, social scientists observe a number of related phenomena, such as per capita resource consumption and concentrations of population in urban areas. Higher levels of energy usage, in turn, mean greater impact on the environment, such as more extraction of fossil fuels and the degradation associated with them or more reliance on nuclear fission and, thereby, the creation of its poisonous by-products.

Increases in population and urbanization often tend to be accompanied by technological innovation, which could potentially be good for the environment (Simon 1990). Yet if history is any indicator, as new technologies are developed, they are often used to make deeper and more lasting incursions into the environment (Freudenburg and Frickel 1995). Technological innovation, thus, often has a net negative impact on the environment. As society develops in the twenty-first century, it will continue to be crucial that citizens remain vigilant about the ways in which technology is conceptualized and used.

Also of significance is the question of technological diffusion. With increasing global patterns of commerce, communication, and transportation, less developed countries are exposed to technologies heretofore typically confined to the developed world. Closely associated with technological diffusion are dramatically rising consumption patterns (e.g., Grubler 1991, 1997). Consider that with the United States currently having about 4–5 percent of the world's population, it currently consumes about 25 percent of its energy. If every society consumed resources at the rate of developed countries, as those in North America and Western Europe do currently, the world's resources, productive capacity, and sinks would be taxed far greater than they already are, beyond sustainable levels.

Yet consumption patterns are catching up the world over. Consider that China, the most populous country in the world, has very recently become the world's largest consumer of a variety of commodities, from soybeans to lead and copper (Commodity Research Bureau 2005). As rapidly developing countries continue to move toward the standard of living of the most developed countries, the overall ecological impact on the planet will likely increase to heretofore unprecedented levels.

Thus, as we move well into the third millennium, we will face a number of daunting socio-environmental challenges. Air pollution and water pollution are increasingly pressing problems, which manifest themselves on a number of levels, from international to local communities. People in farming regions will increasingly have to grapple with exhaustion of topsoil in which to grow food. Worldwide, there are problems of global warming, deforestation, depletion of fresh water for drinking, and pollution of what resources there are left. Sources of food that

many people have traditionally taken for granted, such as a steady supply of fish in coastal areas, are in dwindling supply.

While environmental degradation and resource depletion are worldwide problems, the specific causes and manifestations of the problems are quite distinct in different parts of the world. Certainly, the natural geography of a place—tropical, boreal, or temperate, for example—has a large effect on how people interact with the environment around them, both in terms of how they make their livelihoods and in terms of how they affect the environment. Every bit as important as the natural geography is the level of development of a country or a region—its level of affluence and technological sophistication—for this allows, and even encourages, people to have an impact on the environment.

Yet as we confront these daunting problems, a large portion of society appears to be in denial. In much of the developed world, consumption rates are at an all-time high—for example, sales of sport utility vehicles and other vehicles that consume high levels of fossil fuels and put a heavy burden on the air we breathe have increased to unprecedented levels.

There are energy technologies that are more friendly to the natural environment and thus more sustainable in the long run. However, many “alternative” fuel sources, such as solar and wind energy and hydrogen fuel cells, are not at the stage of development where they may be able to compete with fossil fuels of oil and coal in terms of costs in an open market.

Around the broad outlines we have discussed, a number of issues will continue to press society's abilities. There will always be a need for energy sources. Inequality of access to energy and other resources will continue to be a problem. In addition to finding and making useable sources of energy and other resources, technology will need to be developed to face the inevitable consequences of making incursions into the natural ecosystem to acquire those resources.

## CONCLUSION

With society moving into the twenty-first century, the challenges associated with the environment and the interrelated factors of technology, population, and patterns of consumption continue to present themselves. While societies have always faced such problems, the *magnitude* of environmental and technological challenges faced by the people in the twenty-first century is unprecedented in human history. There are more people than ever before with the technological wherewithal to make more profound incursions into the planet and its biosphere, consuming resources at greater rates than at any other time in human history. These factors promise to make questions regarding the environment and technology perhaps the most critical faced by society in the twenty-first century and beyond.

# TERRORISM

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## INTERDISCIPLINARITY OF TERRORISM

Terrorism is an interdisciplinary topic that requires the contributions of experts in the areas of history, political science, social science, philosophy, religion, psychology, sociology, finance, strategic studies, international relations, criminal justice, crime prevention and control, public safety, warfare, counterterrorism theory and practice, anthropology, languages, and cultural studies. History, the social sciences, political science, and psychology are especially useful in understanding the origins, reasons, justifications, motivations, and changes in the meaning and definition of terrorism. The recent emergence of terrorism, which is inspired by religious fundamentalism and ethnic-separatist elements rather than political ideology, serves as but one critical example of the complex nature of this phenomenon. For these reasons, diverse theoretical approaches are needed to explain the worldwide growth and expansion of terrorism within the complex matrix of social, cultural, economic, religious, psychological, political, and strategic variables (Ross 1996; Sharif 1996).

Terrorism is political in its objectives and motives; violent or threatening violence; meant to have wide and deep psychological repercussions beyond the particular victim or target; committed by an organization with a command hierarchy that can be identified or a cell configuration that permits conspiratorial activities; and carried out by a subnational group or nonstate body. Thus, terrorism can be defined as the deliberate generation, instillation, and exploitation of fear into a competing group, party, government, or public opinion through violence or the threat of violence with the goal of introducing political change (Noble 1998).

Terrorists may be loners or people working in cells, small groups, or large coalitions. They do not answer to nor are they dependent on any government, they function across national borders, use advanced technology, and receive funding from anywhere in the world. Contemporary terrorists are not worried about limiting casualties. Current terrorism takes great advantage of ease and speed of travel, advanced communications and technology, anonymous financial transactions, and scientific and technological breakthroughs that greatly facilitate its mission. Most of all, the “new” terrorism has a global dimension. Indeed, globalization and religious extremism have greatly facilitated the activities of terrorism.

The interest of the social sciences in terrorism dates back to the analysis by political sociologists of anarchism, revolutionary movements, and insurgencies. Sociologists focusing on social change have also dedicated considerable space to the topic. In the past, Marxist and leftist sociologists addressed issues related to terrorism but did so within the context of liberation movements. The analysis and development of the area expanded in the 1970s, spurred by the growth of terrorism in the Middle East, related especially to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict; in Europe, particularly in Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), and Italy; and in various Latin American countries. In South America, reformers involved in the liberation theology movement and the struggle for social and political change in the hemisphere also contributed to the field. Work on the phenomenon was no doubt influenced and colored by political currents such as Marxism and other left-leaning approaches that stressed themes related to the struggle of the oppressed against

subjugation and exploitation by colonialism and capitalism. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the center and center-right perspectives emphasized instead the darker, criminal, or antidemocratic side of terrorist activities. Sociology provided the conceptual approaches, theories, and tools to analyze, understand, and explain terrorism as a social phenomenon and to formulate remedial and preventative interventions.

## THE DEFINITION OF TERRORISM

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The statutory definition that the U.S. government uses to track and keep statistics on terrorism is as follows: “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” [22 U.S.C. 2656f (d)]. By this definition, terrorism has several elements:

1. Premeditation. There must be an intent and a prior decision to commit an act that entails this type of violence.
2. Political motivation, thus eliminating criminal violence for monetary gain or personal revenge. Of course, criminal violence can have political repercussions too as it generates more and more fear of crime. And, on the other hand, terror is often connected with criminal activities but its goal is serving a greater good as defined by the terrorists.
3. Attacking people who cannot defend themselves or respond in kind.
4. Planned and carried out by a group. There is debate whether or not there can be a case of “individual” terrorism. The place and the role of clandestine agents and subnational groups is a delicate issue because at times governments, including the United States, have used both. This has sometimes meant the use of force, which has generated civilian casualties.

It is noteworthy that the definition does not include the threat of violence and thus serves to establish that terrorism is but one form of behavior along a continuum of possible political behaviors people engage in to express themselves and to cast attention toward the social, economic, and political conditions they desire to change. In this area, then, it is essential to bear in mind that terrorism is first and foremost a method that is centered on what people do rather than who they are and what they are attempting to achieve. Thus, counterterrorism can be viewed as an attempt to civilize the way in which a heated political contest is waged.

## THE HISTORY OF TERRORISM

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Terrorism is basically and fundamentally political in nature. It is also very much about power—that is, pursuing

power, acquiring power, and using power to cause political change. Consequently, terrorism is also violence or, just as importantly, the threat of violence used and aimed in the pursuit of or in the service of a political objective.

The word *terrorism* initially became popular during the French Revolution when it did have a progovernmental, “positive” connotation. The *régime de la terreur* of 1793–1794, from which the English word originates, was established as a means to impose and consolidate power during the transient anarchical time of disorder and unrest that followed the revolution of 1789. Thus, instead of meaning an antigovernment operation, like it does today, the *régime de la terreur* was a government tool used to consolidate and firm up the power of the new government by intimidating, terrifying, and eliminating counterrevolutionaries, political opponents, and other dissidents deemed to be “enemies of the people.” Less than a year after the execution of Robespierre, the word *terrorism* was popularized in English by Edmund Burke (1790) in his polemic tract against the French Revolution where he wrote about “thousands of those Hell hounds called Terrorists. . . let loose on the people” (p. 34).

One of the major outcomes of the French Revolution was the growing rejection of absolute monarchical systems that claimed to derive their authority directly from God and therefore to be entitled to a divine right to rule without constraints or limits. It also inspired the overall political awakening of Europe. Independence and nationalist movements flourished and succeeded in creating modern nation-states in some parts of Europe, as in the case of Germany and Italy. At the same time, dramatic socioeconomic changes were taking place as a consequence of massive industrialization, particularly in England and Germany. The alienation and exploitation of workers by nineteenth-century capitalism provided the fertile ground for the sprouting and growing of new “universalist” ideologies. The most important ones are socialism and eventually communism.

During this period of social change in Europe the concept of terrorism was expanded and elaborated on. For example, an Italian revolutionary, Carlo Pisacane, who forsook his nobility status to lead an ill-fated rebellion against the Bourbon monarchy in Southern Italy, developed the idea of “propaganda by deed,” a concept that has exerted considerable influence on revolutionaries, insurgents, and terrorists ever since. Pisacane argued that violence is needed not only to attract attention to the cause or to generate publicity but to inform, educate, and, in the end, get the masses behind the revolution. Pamphlets, wall posters, or gatherings will never effectively substitute for the didactic value of violence.

One of the most notable groups to put Pisacane’s theory into practice was probably the Narodnaya Volya (people’s will or people’s freedom), a small group of Russian proponents of constitutional government in Russia started in 1878 to limit the unconstrained power of the tsar. Ironically, the success of the group in assassinating Tsar

Alexander II on March 1, 1881, led to its complete suppression. The message of Pisacane and of Narodnaya Volya deeply affected the growing anarchist movement. An anarchist conference in London in 1881 endorsed the killing of the tsar and supported the idea of tyrannicide as a means for achieving revolutionary change.

By the 1930s, terrorism did not mean so much revolutionary movements and violence against governments or empires but rather the politics and practices of mass oppression and repression used by dictatorships and their leaders against their own citizenry. In other words, it meant again, like at the end of the terror regime in France, governmental abuse of power as it was taking place especially in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Stalinist Soviet Union.

Similar forms of state-planned, imposed, or directed violence have taken place and are still occurring in various parts of the world. Violence has been a well-known aspect of right of center military dictatorships in Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, especially in Chile, Argentina (Buchanan 1987; Cox 1983), Brazil, Greece, Spain, Portugal, various African countries, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma, and Pakistan. Use of violence and intimidation by government authorities against their own people is generally identified as *terror* to distinguish such behavior from terrorism or violence that is carried out by nonstate entities (Moxon-Browne 1994).

The meaning of terrorism changed once more after World War II, thereby reclaiming the revolutionary reputation with which it is associated today. In the late 1940s, 1950s, and into the 1960s, terrorism was connected with the uprisings by indigenous populations in various parts of the world—Africa, Asia, the Middle East—to expel European colonial powers from their countries. At times they involved long guerrilla wars or terrorism. Well-known examples are Algeria, Cyprus, Israel, Kenya, and Vietnam. Many nationalistic rebellions took the form of guerrilla war. The Cuban Revolution of 1956 became a model for left-wing ideologues as a struggle against capitalist powers. Because these movements were perceived internationally as a struggle for liberation, decolonization, and self-determination, thanks in part to adroit public relations campaigns by the insurgents and their supporters in the First World, the term *freedom fighter* became increasingly used to describe them. This was also part of the Cold War's psychological and political warfare between the Soviet Union and its supporters, which praised the insurgents fighting against capitalism, and the United States and Western European countries, which resisted them, for instance, in the Philippines and Puerto Rico.

At the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, terrorism was still viewed within a revolutionary framework even though usage of the term was expanded to encompass nationalist and ethnic separatist groups beyond a colonial or neocolonial context as well as radical and ideologically driven organizations. In particular, ethnic minorities seeking independence or autonomy used terrorism not only to inflict casualties and serious damage to the dominant

group but also to attract international attention, sympathy, and aid. The late 1960s also saw major student's upheavals in Western Europe and the United States that had in some cases terrorist overtones and rhetoric (Wilkinson 1994).

More recently, the term *terrorism* has been used to describe broader, less narrow phenomena. In the early 1980s, terrorism was considered a planned and calculated strategy to destabilize the Western world as part of a vast global conspiracy. Claire Sterling (1981) in her book *The Terror Network* described apparently isolated terrorist events committed by different groups around the globe that were actually connected elements of a secret plan, under the direction of the former USSR and implemented by its Warsaw Pact countries to annihilate the free world. At the time the Cold War atmosphere offered the theory as appealing, particularly to the American and some western European governments.

The communist conspiracy was eventually overshadowed in the mid-1980s when a series of suicide bombings aimed mostly at American diplomatic and military targets in the Middle East abruptly called attention to the growing menace of state-sponsored terrorism. Several renegade foreign governments such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, and Syria were suspected and accused of being actively involved in sponsoring or commissioning terrorist acts.

In the early 1990s, the meaning and use of the term *terrorism* were once again changed by the appearance of two new expressions—narco-terrorism and the “gray area phenomenon.” Narco-terrorism was initially linked to an overall communist and Soviet plot to sabotage Western society. It presumably involved the use of drug trafficking to support and implement the objectives of certain governments and terrorist organizations, such as the Soviet Union, Cuba, Bulgaria, and Nicaragua. But the emphasis on this supposed type of narco-terrorism may have effectively diverted attention from yet another emerging trend—namely, the alliance of criminal and violence-driven organizations with terrorist and guerrilla entities that employed violence not only for the advancement of their business activities but for achieving political ends as well. One of the best-known examples of this was the growing power and influence of the Colombian cocaine cartels with their close alliance with left-wing terrorist groups in Colombia and Peru (Brown and Merrill 1995).

In the 1990s, terrorism was also cast by some analysts into a “gray area phenomenon,” thereby stressing the difficulty in clearly pinpointing what terrorism is. Basically, this approach reflects the growing fluidity of subnational conflict in the post-Cold War era. Terrorism in this sense represents threats to the stability of nation-states by nonstate actors and violence affecting large regions of the world or major urban areas where the central government has lost its influence and control to new half-political, half-criminal groups. It also covers different types of conflicts that do not fit well into traditionally recognized concepts of war as the fighting between clearly marked armed forces of two or more countries. It involves instead irregular forces as one or



more of the combatants. The shift here is clearly toward nonstate conflict. Consequently, one could argue that terrorism is simply a manifestation of violence in a particular time period and thus it evolves and manifests itself in different ways. In a sense, terrorism is always changing (Alexander and Latter 1990; Baumel, 1999; Coates 1987; Corcoran, 1995; Smith 1994; Stern 1996; Walter 1995).

## THE NEW TERRORISM

The United States and the world, particularly the Western world, were awakened to the existence of a new form of terrorism based in the Middle East by a series of events that ultimately culminated in the September 11, 2001, catastrophic attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. Since then, the names of Osama Bin-Laden and Al-Qaeda have become universally known and immediately connected with a violent struggle with an international reach and a strong religious dimension (Stern 1999) against the United States and Western interests based in the Middle East. The new terrorism has greater potential to cause damage to the United States, the West, and other countries, including parts of the Muslim world. The dangerous nature of the new terrorism stems from its being organized around loosely linked cells that do not depend on a single leader or a state sponsor. It is transnational, borderless, and carried out by nonstate actors. In comparing the "new" with the "old" terrorism, one would emphasize the following:

1. The new terrorism is more violent. In the old model, terrorists sought attention, not mass casualties. Presently, they want both.
2. The most dangerous terrorists today are transnational nonstate actors who operate at the global level and want to inflict damage and even destroy all secular state systems, including those with Islamic roots. Previous terrorist organizations held locally oriented aspirations; today's terrorism is global in reach and has strategic objectives. Its members are transnational, nonstate actors whose allegiance goes to a cause, not a particular state or political entity.
3. The new terrorism is much better financed than its predecessors that depended on state sponsors to fund their activities.
4. Current terrorists are more impenetrable than previous groups. The loose, but networked, cellular structure of Al Qaeda and similar terrorist organizations are especially difficult. Religious and highly motivated extremists are also difficult to entrap using money, entertainment, and sex.
5. The reputed availability of weapons of mass destruction greatly raised the risk on the threat posed by contemporary terrorists and the potential damage they can inflict. In the past, the major concern was about small arms; explosives, particularly Semtex or plastique; rocketpropelled

grenades and an occasional shoulder-fired antiaircraft missile (Gavel 2002).

The planned use of liquid explosives in London to down airplanes is the latest addition to the growing list of terrorist tools.

## TERRORISM AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Significant changes in the terrorists' methods include the use of new technologies, the deployment of terrorists across international frontiers, and changes in the origins of support. Information technologies used by terrorists include the Internet, cellular phones, instant messaging, and real-time photographic and filming capabilities. Such capabilities have amplified the global reach of terrorist organizations. As but one example, hacking has been used. Internet sites have been placed under attack; Web sites have been hijacked or defaced; there are documented cases of denial of Internet service, automated e-mail bombings, and Web sit-ins. Management and administrative functions of terrorist organizations; coordinating operations; recruiting possible members; improving communications between members; attracting people sympathetic to the cause; collecting, managing, and transferring funds; and spreading the group's message and philosophy have been greatly facilitated by the impressive technological advances in global information. This has facilitated the tasks of the terrorists and allowed them to expand the range of their activities. In particular, the synchronization of terrorist attacks, such as those of September 11, 2001, and those on various U.S. embassies in East Africa in 1998, was made possible by the use of contemporary information technology (Denning 2000).

Globalization and the establishment of regional trading zones such as the European Union, Mercosur, the North American Free Trade Area, and others have made it easier for terrorists to expand their activities across international borders, borders that seemingly no longer exist. Thus, terrorists recognize their efforts are less easily detected through the Internet. This has facilitated the territorial expansion of terrorist groups, assisted in the establishment of terrorist cells, and promoted free movement across vast regions of the world in the planning and execution of terrorist activities.

Technological innovations and the ease of financial operations worldwide have also assisted terrorists in expanding their operations. While Al-Qaeda is reputed to be one of the best-financed terrorist networks, it is reported that Aum Shinrikyo, Hamas, Hezbollah, the IRA (O'Day 1994), the Tamil Tigers, and others groups benefit from the vast network of funding sources. These sources may include legal enterprises such as nonprofit and charitable organizations, legitimate companies, and illegal enterprises such as drug production, trafficking, smuggling, bank robberies, fraud, kidnappings, and extortion. Web sites have also been used to raise funds (Center for Strategic and International Studies 1998).

The smooth movement of terrorists' financial resources is illustrated by the reported movement of gold and U.S. currency across the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Once the gold and currency arrived in Pakistan, they were swiftly transferred to the informal *hawala* or *hundi* banking system to other Middle Eastern countries. There it was converted into gold bullion and dispersed around the world. Additionally, terrorist funds have been converted into other commodities such as diamonds and tanzanite. In general, terrorist groups, whose assets may be a small fraction of the total amount of funds moved daily by organized transnational crime groups, use a variety of vehicles for the transfer of money, from couriers to banks, money changing enterprises, and informal exchanges such as the *hawala* or *hundi* systems (Viano 2003).

## TERRORISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD SCENE

Samuel Huntington (1996) outlined a theory of conflict for the twenty-first century, stating that particular types of conflict are known to dominate different historical periods. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the United States is the world's only superpower. The struggles that may threaten world peace will no longer focus on nationalism or ideology. Rather, most conflicts result from cultural confrontations that threaten to spread violence; one such cultural conflict is religion. In Huntington's view, international peace will be especially threatened in "torn countries," where more than one sociocultural orientation exists. The Balkans, where violent ethnic and religious strife and ethnic cleansing took place in the 1990s, represents but one example of Huntington's thesis in which religion and terrorism are linked.

According to Huntington's thesis, terrorism will probably continue to find supporters among violent, true believers in areas of conflict. The implications for the United States seem clear: First, it will be targeted by religious zealots from different cultural backgrounds because they believe that the United States has wrongly intervened and violated their religious norms. Western Europe and Japan may be targeted as well. Second, since the United States routinely is open to immigration there is a growing potential for religious strife. While the United States is not a "torn" country, it does provide a fertile field for zealots of different religions who want to change or punish America with violence and for right-wing extremists who violently object to the increasing diversity of the country and forcefully oppose those who tolerate it and the government that makes it possible. The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing is a clear example of the latter.

Bruce Hoffman (1998) and Walter Laqueur (1996, 1997, 2000) state that we are not only witnessing a resurgence and expansion of terrorist groups motivated by religion, but the situation is made even more difficult by the fact that religious terrorists behave differently than ethnic

and nationalistic terrorists. The reason is that they are not constrained by the same factors that may inhibit other types of terrorists. In Hoffman's view, religious terrorists differ from political terrorists in many ways. *Holy terror* represents a value system that is opposite to "secular terror;" secular terrorists function within the dominant political and cultural reality that they to replace with their own. Religious or "holy" terrorists are under no such constraint. Although fundamentalist and violent extremists may be attracted to any religion (Sargent 1995), for holy terrorists the world is a battlefield between the forces of good and evil, light and darkness. Winning is not understood in political terms. Rather, the enemy must be completely destroyed and, for this reason, killing is the outcome of an operation. For holy terrorists, killing is a sacramental act; the goal of their operation. For Islamic terrorism, the purpose of terrorism is to kill the enemies of God or to convert them to Islam (Rapoport 1988).

## TERRORISM AND GLOBALIZATION

The current threat posed by terrorism is the product of the collision of different elements: maximum Western power, particularly that of the United States; globalization, driven mostly by Western interests; and the fundamentalist reaction to these trends affecting centuries-old ways of life in different parts of the world (Barber 1996). The root causes of and the growth of religious terrorism can be located in the declining influence of traditional forms of social and cultural cohesion within societies. The impact of globalization, political repression, economic disparity, and social change enhance the sense of fragility, instability, and unpredictability that exists throughout various parts of the world. Presently, the scale, amount, and intensity of religious terrorism, rather unprecedented in militancy and activity, indicate the depth of perception that those particular faiths and the communities linked to them stand at a critical survival juncture and that extreme measures must be taken to ensure that they continue to exist.

The perceived corruption of indigenous customs, religions, languages, economies, and entertainment are blamed on an international system that is frequently associated with American culture and values. The resulting distortions in local communities that result from being exposed to the global marketplace of ideas, goods, and values are more frequently blamed on the U.S.-led modernization. Christopher Coker (2002) aptly observes that while globalization is reducing the propensity for instrumental violence between states and communities, it is increasing the incentives for expressive violence or violence that is ritualistic, symbolic, and communicative. The current international terrorism is more frequently rooted in a need to assert identity or meaning against the advancing forces of homogeneity, particularly on the part of those cultures that are threatened by or are left behind by the secular atmosphere created by Western-led globalization.

According to a report published by the United Nations Development Program, one of the regions with the biggest deficit in terms of human development—the Arab world—is also the epicenter of the world's most intense religion-driven terrorism. There is discontent in disenfranchised areas of the region of the world where the belief exists that the promises of globalization that include greater freedom, economic prosperity, and access to education, training, and knowledge are unfulfilled. As a result, there are dashed expectations, increasing resentment toward the hegemonic and often corrupt governments supported by the United States, and a desire to strike at the forces of modernization and globalization. There is also a desire to change the course of U.S. policy in the Middle East and Persian Gulf, particularly as it affects the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Given the enormous military power of the United States, the preferred course of action is not direct confrontation but the asymmetrical response that is terrorism.

The United States is a preferred target because of its involvement in the politics and conflicts of various regions of the world and because it is perceived to be the primary force behind globalization. Thus, today it is not possible to analyze terrorism without taking into consideration globalization. Both are tightly interwoven forces that affect and characterize global security in the twenty-first century. The main concern is whether or not terrorism will be able to disrupt the promise of a better life for millions of people.

Thus, one could say that terrorism is a by-product of larger historical shifts in the worldwide distribution of power and economic, military, political, ideological, and cultural resources. Assuming that current trends will continue, global disparities and inequalities will also continue to grow. Thus, we can anticipate that terrorism will not only continue to exist but will grow and expand. At the same time, terrorists will have continued access to more powerful technologies, increased territory and more targets, enhanced recruiting techniques, and more exploitable sources of discontent and rage than before (Laqueur 2004).

A serious problem is that the response of the West to terrorism is inadequate, superficial, and unlikely to dampen or mitigate any of the long-term trends already mentioned above. The benign intentions of the mostly and increasingly secular West do not necessarily appear benign to those who are marginalized by globalization. To frustrated people in the Arab and Muslim world and elsewhere, the strict following of fundamentalist religious doctrines and practices appear to be a rational response to the perceived threat when their own governments offer no alternative solution. The reality is that small groups of dedicated terrorists could not survive and operate for any extended period of time without the widespread support of the larger population. Any effective interventions by the West would begin at and focus on the broader, enabling environment that must be studied and understood (Kupperman 1985; Kupperman and Trent 1979).

Moreover, a panoply of long-term policy instruments should be used to address the international environment

that makes it possible for terrorist networks to remain formidable organizations (Howard 2002). There is no question that the more effective policy tools are probably nonmilitary in nature such as intelligence, public diplomacy, cooperation with allies, updated international conventions and treaties, reforms leading to genuine democratization, and economic assistance (Burton 1976; Campbell 1988; Cobban 1984).

## SECULAR, RELIGIOUS, AND FUNDAMENTALIST TERRORISM

Religious beliefs are a useful, powerful, and ready-made source for justifying terrorism because beliefs sanctify the terrorist and deify the terrorism. Religious terrorism employs theological issues to justify violence and terror. Thus, terrorists are not subject to social limitations relating to violence and killing is justified given those being killed are enemies of their deity. To be “deified” means that the act of terrorism itself is made sacred and holy. The religious terrorists are mortals who are on a mission from God (Kibble 1996).

There is yet another difference between secular and religious terrorists. Political terrorism is also the theater aimed at influencing a wider audience to spread a message and obtain support. Thus, targets must be carefully chosen and there are some limits to what one can do. On the other hand, religious terrorists work only for their god. Thus, they need no wider audience or social approval. Juergensmeyer (1992, 1999) describes the conditions that must exist for terrorists to reach these conclusions: Believers must identify with a god and believe they are participating in a struggle to change the course of history by addressing good and evil. True-believing terrorists actually mimic and exaggerate mainstream social patterns and beliefs. They use the established social paths and models of religion and ideology to justify their actions (Oliverio 1998; Pearlestein 1991).

Fundamentalist terrorism in the twenty-first century exists mostly in the Middle East and/or in Islamic countries. The roots of terrorism in the Middle East are complex but can be reduced to four major areas: (1) questions on the political control of Palestine or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Nusse 1998); (2) who should rule the Arab world or intra-Arab rivalries and struggles; (3) the relations between the two main branches of Islam, Sunnis, and Shiites; and (4) how to eliminate and expel Western colonialism and imperialism and once again create a pan-Arab “Caliphate” or realm of Islam.

Terrorism originating in this area is especially driven by anti-Western feelings because of the historical colonial domination and exploitation of the region. France and especially Great Britain dominated the region or attempted to for centuries. The Soviet Union also made forays attempting to gain a warm water port and counteract the other two colonial countries' influence. The United

States has also played an increasingly dominant role in the region linked to the exploitation of its energy resources and at times in direct or indirect confrontation with the other Western colonial powers and the Soviets. The rejection of Western influence is connected with the colonial experience and also with the deeply held feeling that this entire region should be an exclusive Islamic realm. The presence of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the region is perceived as colonialism, sacrilegious, and as a modern version of the medieval crusades. The ideology of Al Qaeda and of other groups inspired or associated with it stresses both themes—anticolonialism or “anticrusaders” and the reestablishment of the Caliphate—as a justification for their terrorist activities (Gurr 1993; Hoffman 1998; Howard and Sawyer 2003, 2004; Johnson 1997). The terrorist is fundamentally an altruist who believes he is serving a good cause. The terrorist is basically a violent intellectual ready and committed to use force in the realization of his goals (Perdue 1989).

## NEW AREAS OF INQUIRY

After September 11, 2001, interest and research in terrorism has grown exponentially. One such area of inquiry addresses the mind-set of the terrorists and the tactics they employ in their quest for power and, ultimately, political and social change. Although terrorists bank on the efficacy of violence in achieving change, their actions are not random, crazed, or capricious acts as politicians maintain they are. On the contrary, these actions are carefully planned and conservatively executed. Innocent and harmless people get caught in the middle just as they are in acts of war. Both the military and the terrorists claim that they are performing carefully targeted acts—“precision bombing” in U.S. military parlance. Recently, there have been increases in the use of violence. Possibly due to the “CNN effect” or the need to attract worldwide media coverage for maximum impact, terrorists have been engaging in more dramatic and destructively lethal deeds to garner the same amount of attention that a less violent and bloody action would have obtained in the past, looking for recognition and publicity. In a world saturated with violence and aggression by the media, entertainment, movies, video games, and sports such as football, hockey, boxing, terrorists seem to have understood that to hold a jaded public’s attention they must increase the level and drama of their actions (Miller 1982).

Another element that is affecting terrorism’s organizational and operational dynamics is the Internet. The rise and expansion of network forms of organization is a central outcome of the continuing information revolution. The speed of communications, the facility of sharing and diffusing information, and the ease and instantaneity of transferring funds worldwide have changed contemporary life, including terrorism’s conduct and modes of operation.

This permits the creation of organizations with multiple, dispersed leaders and private sources of funding. The reasons, motives, and rationales of the terrorists may not have changed but their *modus operandi* certainly has. What the information and Internet age have made possible are flatter, less hierarchical, very flexible, and localized structures and networks of power with centripetal dynamics fueled by intense and easy communications and exchanges (Picard 1993).

Terrorism is evolving. Terrorists’ shift toward less hierarchical organizational structures and their growing use of advanced communications technologies for command, control, and coordination will further empower small terrorist groups and even individuals. While most of the governmental efforts and public concern, anxiety, and attention are focused on preventing and foiling traditional violent terrorist acts, the next 9/11 might very well be an act of cyberterrorism or massive *netwar*, disabling regional, national, or even international computer-driven systems that control practically every aspect of our lives (Pollit 1988; Whine 1999). The content of information and the conduits of information infrastructures very likely will become the new targets. In this area, the destructive power of terrorism will be exponentially greater than it has been in the past, even if it had been able to use “weapons of mass destruction.” It is also true, of course, that the frequency and extent to which terrorist organizations use information infrastructures to carry out their activities may eventually make them vulnerable to detection and destruction by counterterrorist entities (Rubin 1991).

The widespread uncertainty of the forces of globalization and the search for a new world order create a fertile ground for the creation and development of religious terrorist groups, with religious conviction functioning as a firm anchor. These groups perceive an opportunity to shape history and the world in line with their divine duty, cause, and mission. It is essential that we understand the inner logic of these groups and the dynamics that produce terrorism. As we progress further into the twenty-first century, it is doubtful that the United States and other Western governments are adequately prepared to meet this challenge (Juergensmeyer 1999). Thus, the need exists for further research in areas such as nationalistic and ethnic terrorism, technological terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, changing group structures and the metamorphosis of terrorism, the origins of terrorism in the Middle East, and the role of the media (Zanni 1999).

Future public policy concerns include counterterrorist measures and the impact such policy will have on democratic society. The passage and reauthorization of the Patriot Act is a clear indication that in the future a democratic government will respond to a real or perceived terrorist threat by introducing measures that greatly limit civil and political liberties. In the wake of 9/11, population movement control, transportation security, the protection of infrastructures deemed vital, the introduction of a system of threat warnings, and immigration and border control

measures were quickly introduced. The de facto adoption of a national identity card, in the form of a federally standardized driver's license, was approved. Moreover, the federal government has engaged in widespread detention and interrogation; introduced new surveillance tools, instituted new financial regulations, controls, and rewards; modified the administration of the justice system; and promoted greater information sharing among law enforcement and intelligence agencies. The public desire for a completely risk-free life and society in a world dominated by science and technology, which promise and deliver a constantly increased control of daily life and death situations, provided vast popular support for this approach (Labeviere 2000). However popular the international war on terrorism is, the civil and human rights of citizens and noncitizens alike were reduced and at times violated in the process. This is a fertile field for investigation, analysis, inquiry, and affirmation of democratic values for the social scientist (Merari 1985).

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIOLOGISTS

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The lack of a comprehensive strategy to address terrorism based on a deep-rooted, well-grounded comprehension of the history, patterns, motivations, and types of terrorism reflects the lack of understanding of terrorism in the academic community. Some academics consider terrorism a too policy-oriented area to be worthy of serious research. Since terrorism is a multidisciplinary topic it depends on the interaction and collaboration of a number of disciplines. In the United States, most of the analyses on terrorism are being conducted in policy-oriented research institutes, which are often narrowly defined to fit the interests and time frame attendant to government-supported contracts.

The academy, on the other hand, is no more strategically oriented, visionary, and creative than the government. There is an urgent need for multidisciplinary collaboration that also includes law enforcement, intelligence, and finance. What is most needed is a concerted effort to move beyond the episodic interest in this phenomenon and instead develop, plan, and fund a long-term research and policy development agenda. Sociologists and in particular political sociologists can have a major role to play in researching the impact of antiterrorism measures and exposing whatever threats are posed to democracy, human freedom, and individual rights. And sociologists who focus on mass movements, group-think, mob reactions, and race and ethnic relations also have much to offer to a society in need of such information.

Additionally, the repercussions of the "war on terrorism" on international human rights and humanitarian laws provide a fertile ground for research and analysis for the sociologist of law. The creation of the "enemy combatant" label to facilitate weakening of the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war and the alleged mistreatment and torture of prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Bagram base in Afghanistan, and Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, among others, serve as important sociological reminders of the effects culture and civil society have on human nature and the aggressive and violent instincts of *Homo sapiens*.

There is no question that social scientists have a major contribution to make to the analysis, understanding, prevention, and policymaking relative to terrorism. But within sociology it will also be important, given the political nature of actions identified as terrorist, that the sociologist be vigilant, adhere to professional standards, and maintain an independence of thought, analysis, and vision. In the future, the discipline may again be confronted with issues relating to Howard Becker's question and critical challenge of the past, "Sociology for whom?"

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## THE SOCIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

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### FORMS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF VIOLENCE

In its broadest meaning, the term *violence* refers to a range of human activities intended to inflict harm or injury (Levine and Rosich 1996). Some acts of violence are spontaneous and informal, occurring without premeditation or structure; others are methodically planned in advance. Some violence is interpersonal, enveloping one or a few individuals; other violent acts are vastly broader and more formal, encompassing numerous victims, entire groups, or even whole societies. Violence can be directed inward as in self-destructive behavior, including suicide; it can also be aimed at other human beings. Finally, violence is frequently aimed at causing physical injury; but it might also be intended to create embarrassment or loss of face.

Based on the informality/formality of its source as well as the amount of destruction it generates, violence can be said to range from the micro level (e.g., “Losing his temper, a man takes a knife from the kitchen drawer and stabs to death his wife”), through the midlevel (“Having planned for 13 months, two students open fire at their high school, shooting to death 12 schoolmates and a teacher”), to the macro level of behavior (“More than 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda are massacred”).

Destructive behavior directed against property may also have a basis in violence. Certain property crimes have a symbolic component that acts as a threat to do physical harm. Dating back to the end of the Civil War, for example, cross burning was historically linked to the murder of

former slaves in the South who competed with whites for jobs (Lane 1997). A burning cross was designed therefore to send a threatening message not only to the primary victim but also to black Americans in general. In contemporary American society, burning a cross on the lawn of a black family that has recently moved into a previously all-white neighborhood is taken as a threat of violence to come (Levin and McDevitt 2002).

Violence is an interdisciplinary concept, some variant of which has had a place in the research and teaching of several of the behavioral sciences. Introductory social psychology texts almost invariably contain a chapter on aggression in which the causes and consequences of microlevel (interpersonal) and midlevel forms of violence are addressed. Topics typically include issues such as frustration-aggression, the effects of punishment, and social learning. By contrast, political science texts focus mainly on macrolevel acts of violence, including war, revolution, and terrorism.

Criminologists have played a major role in conducting research into the development and maintenance of violence in society. Not surprisingly, they have focused on forms of violent behavior that have been negatively sanctioned in criminal law.

Sociologists have emphasized, however, that not all violence is criminal in nature. In fact, certain violent activity is positively sanctioned either formally or informally. During wartime, for example, the willingness to kill the enemy is regarded as a patriotic act, whereas the failure to engage the enemy in mortal combat is a punishable offense. Moreover, in middle and high schools around the

country, bullies are frequently found not among the geeks, nerds, and dorks but among the most popular students. And professional boxers, wrestlers, and football players—those most adept at playing combative sports that attract large audiences—have been rewarded with salaries of millions of dollars. Moreover, their images are honorifically placed on trading cards, on T-shirts, and sometimes on the cover of celebrity magazines.

Even criminal violence can be positively sanctioned. Informal sanctions for violent behavior can be found when gang members encourage one another to fight their shared enemy. Some racist skinhead gangs permit members who have done harm to a person of color to receive their version of “merit badges,” spider web or twin-lightening bolt tattoos worn proudly on their arms and shoulders (Levin and McDevitt 2002).

The influence of roles in the construction of violence has been well-represented in the sociological literature. According to Campbell (1993), gender helps to determine whether a particular act of violence will be negatively or positively sanctioned. Traditionally, boys have been rewarded but girls punished for engaging in the same sorts of aggressive behavior.

Just as it is in the wider society, violence is an important area of interest in the field of sociology. In such courses as social problems, deviance, family violence, and criminology, violence is a major topic. Moreover, much sociological research has addressed various aspects and forms of violence, including war/genocide/terrorism, family/gender, and youth/gang violence. Such interest appears to have gained momentum in the aftermath of September 11, 2001.

## ORIGINS OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

The sociological approach to violence owes much of its original form and substance to the work of nineteenth-century positivists who employed scientific observation and measurement to explain violent crime. Adolphe Quetelet (1836, 1969), a Belgian mathematician in the early nineteenth century, applied statistical techniques to the investigation of crime as a social rather than an individual phenomenon. In particular, Quetelet studied the impact of poverty, education, sex, age, and season of the year on French crime rates. Many of his findings continue, to this day, to find confirmation in social research. For example, rates of violent crime tend to rise during the summer months and are relatively high among impoverished and uneducated populations. Rates of violence over time and cross-nationally as a result of structural variables—for example, availability of firearms, expanded drug markets, racial discrimination, and exposure to violence—continue, to the present day, to occupy the attention of research sociologists (see, e.g., Beeghley 2003).

Later in the nineteenth century, French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1888, 1996) suggested that crime was

both normal and inevitable and that criminal behavior had functional consequences for society. For example, crime calls the attention of society’s members to the prevalence of human suffering and the need for social change. There is no human society in which crime does not exist, according to Durkheim. Such a society would stifle all forms of creativity and demand absolute conformity from all its members. Under these conditions, positive forms of social change would be impossible.

Early sociologists examined violence in the context of a breakdown in social order. Durkheim suggested that *anomie* (i.e., normlessness) increases under conditions of rapid social change—that is, knowledge of the correct ways of behaving are disrupted by a weakening of traditional values and standards, so that individuals no longer see the socially prescribed rules of behavior as making sense. The guidelines for appropriate behavior fall away.

Tonnies (1963) and Simmel ([1903] 1988) advanced this view by stressing the importance of social ties that connect residents to each other and provide stability and cohesiveness. During a time of rapid social change, weak ties among residents weaken social control and make communities unstable and less safe. Also, disorder and disruption of previous orderly life lead to criminal behavior that is followed by violence.

Karl Marx (1956) was another important nineteenth-century figure in the history of the sociology of violence. His ideas about group conflict subsequently became a basis for those contemporary sociologists who take a conflict approach.

For Marx, social class was the most basic division in any society. Under capitalism, conflict existed between those who owned the means of production and those who worked it. Capitalism also created the economic conditions responsible for various forms of crime and violence. Marx believed in the inevitability, through revolution, of an egalitarian state of communism in which workers both owned and worked the means of production. Until the utopian state of communism was achieved, however, class conflict would rule the day.

For Marx, social order was not based on consensus but on the coercion of powerful actors who established the rules of society and benefited from them. The same powerful individuals also controlled societal resources and were in charge of distributing rewards and punishments. The struggle over those resources created conflict that could escalate into violence. Resources included economic assets, political power, and moral values.

Conflict theory underlies present-day research, which has established a positive association between economic inequality and homicide rates as one of the most consistent findings in the cross-national literature on homicide (LaFree 1999). Similarly, conflict theorists have explained urban riots, including those that occurred in major cities of the United States during the 1960s, as a product of blocked or limited opportunities for economic and political development (Sears and McConahay 1973). The more

recent riots during the 1990s and 2000s in Great Britain, Germany, and France, in which second- and third-generation immigrant children were involved, also point to similar causes such as isolation from mainstream society, unemployment, and lack of hope for the future.

Into the twentieth century, sociologists in what was known as the Chicago School (because of their location at the University of Chicago) empirically investigated the impact of the declining social and physical conditions of a neighborhood on increases in crime and violence. A study of Chicago neighborhoods by Clifford Shaw and his associates found that delinquency was highest in areas marked by physical deterioration and a declining population. This explanation was known as the theory of social disorganization (Shaw et al. 1929).

Also early in the twentieth century, George Herbert Mead (1925) and other symbolic interactionists directed the attention of sociology to the influence of childhood socialization on an individual's conformity or nonconformity to the social order. Mead suggested that an individual's self develops out of social interaction. Initially, children are capable only of imitating their significant others without truly understanding the meaning of their acts. With greater cognitive maturity, they then learn to take the role of specific others—that is, to place themselves in the position of important people in their lives and to view themselves from the point of view of these individuals. Finally, to the extent that socialization is successful, children come to take the role of the generalized other, meaning that they see themselves from the standpoint of their entire language community or society. In interaction with others, they develop a consistent self-image and become law-abiding, conforming members of their social group. Conversely, those who suffer a failure in socialization are more likely to resort to crime, violence, and other forms of antisocial behavior.

Mead's work promoted an interactionist perspective. In explaining violence, the victim is seen, from this perspective, as playing an active role in a dynamic exchange. Rather than being a passive recipient, the victim behaves in such a manner as to affect the behavior of the perpetrator who seeks to manage the impression he gives to others. Felson (1982) found, for example, that individuals are more likely to attack a victim who has insulted them. Similarly, Felson and Steadman (1983) determined that perpetrators are more likely to murder rather than assault victims who express aggression against them. According to Felson, Ribner, and Siegel (1984), the presence of an audience—a set of bystanders—can help either to mitigate or to escalate violent behavior by suggesting to the potential perpetrator that violence is supported or discouraged.

## INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL EXPLANATIONS

The predominance of individual-level explanations—those rooted in biological or psychological characteristics—is a result of social psychologists and psychiatrists dominating

the field over the last few decades. The abundant presence of behavioral scientists trained in psychology or psychiatry also accounts for the heavy emphasis historically on microlevel incidents of violence.

## Human Nature

The work of evolutionary psychologists has posited the operation of a constant in human nature—the continuing existence of murder as an effective survival mechanism in a hostile environment. Psychologist David Buss (2005) has recently argued that murder is a normal product of a long-term evolutionary process in which human beings compete for survival and reproductive advantage.

## Sociobiology

Using an evolutionary perspective, some sociobiologists have proposed that violence (or at least the choice of a victim of violence) is determined by what they call “a selfish gene” (Wilson 1999). In other words, violence is a result of a biological urge to increase the likelihood that an individual's genes will survive to be passed to the next generation. Thus, any given individual is more likely to kill someone who does not share his heredity—more likely to murder strangers than cousins, more likely to murder cousins than brothers or sisters.

## Biology

Early biological theories of violent behavior tended to emphasize the influence of body constitution (e.g., Sheldon's somatotyping), heredity (e.g., the XYY chromosome syndrome debate), and intelligence (e.g., IQ as a predictor of delinquency). In more contemporary biological explanations, these variables have been all but replaced by research on hormones (e.g., cortisol and testosterone), learning disabilities, paradoxical reactions to antidepressants, neurological pathology, and repeated head trauma (see Lewis 1999).

## Frustration

One of the most important contributions of social psychologists to the study of violence is the frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard et al. 1939). Derived from research conducted in the mid-twentieth century, this hypothesis was initially stated in absolute terms: Individuals who experience goal blockage, that is, those who are unable to achieve their goals or objectives, were predicted inevitably to become aggressive or violent; conversely, aggression or violence was hypothesized always to be preceded by frustrating circumstances. More recent conceptions no longer depict the relationship as perfect or automatic (frustrated individuals may instead lower expectations, change their philosophy of life, blame themselves). Moreover, there are many sources of aggression, not just frustration. Still, there is a large body of research that



continues to confirm that frustrated individuals tend to become aggressive and that aggression is frequently preceded by frustration (see, e.g., Rhodes 1999).

## STRUCTURAL EXPLANATIONS

More than their counterparts in psychology and psychiatry, sociologists have tended to focus their research agendas on large-scale incidents of violence or on differential rates of violence between cities, states, and nations or over time. In addition, sociologists have sought to locate important sources of violence in social relationships rather than in individual characteristics.

### Strain

In strain theory, sociologists have expanded and enlightened the frustration-aggression hypothesis. They have also indicated the structural (as opposed to the personal and idiosyncratic) sources of frustration in everyday life. In 1957, Columbia University sociologist Robert Merton built on Durkheim's concept of anomie to argue that deviant behavior, including violence arises from social *strain* or imbalance between the culturally approved goals and the socially acceptable means for achieving these goals.

Drawing on Merton's work, Agnew's (1992, 2004) general strain theory proposes that criminal violence is a result of strain, defined to include a range of emotional reactions—frustration, anger, disappointment, fear, and depression—originating in unhealthy and threatening social relationships. In other words, the propensity for violence develops not only in response to frustration but more generally from the way that individuals are treated by others, especially members of their family, neighborhood, workplace, and schools.

Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (1994) examined the relationship between the American preoccupation with material success or "the American Dream" and violent crime rates. These analysts argue not only that material success has come to dominate American culture but also that other social institutions—education, family, politics—have tended to become subservient to the economic system. For example, business executives are expected to put aside family values and relocate their family members if it means furthering their own career opportunities. In the educational system, students' decisions about attending college depend almost entirely on maximizing their job opportunities after graduation. Based on Messner and Rosenfeld's earlier work, Beeghly's (2003) analysis encompasses a number of important structural variables, including income inequality and racial discrimination.

### Social Disorganization

In the 1980s, researchers observed that physical and population decline in Chicago had led to an increase in

crime in neighborhoods whose primary activity was industrial production (Taub, Taylor, and Dunham 1984:4). Similar findings were found for other cities such as Baltimore (Taylor 2000) and Schenectady and Albany (Rabrenovic 1996).

Such factors as broken windows, loud and uncivil youth, trash and junk on the streets, vandalism and graffiti, and boarded-up or abandoned buildings were blamed for first creating perceptions of fear that induce residents to withdraw from social life. The sense of danger and the residents' withdrawal led, in turn, to a decrease in sources of informal social control, which was conducive to crime (Wilson and Kelling 1982). Moreover, where physical deterioration was not addressed, it contributed to a further destabilization and decline of the neighborhood, according to social disorganization theorists (Skogan 1990).

Ralph Taylor (2000:5) operationalizes signs of social disorganization into social and physical incivilities. Social incivilities refer to actions of individuals and groups in the neighborhoods that are perceived by the local residents to be disorderly, troublesome, and threatening. They include behaviors such as hanging out on the street corner, drinking in public, fighting on the streets, and aggressive panhandling. Physical incivilities, on the other hand, represent the conditions of the neighborhood itself such as the presence of trash on the streets, graffiti on the walls, poorly maintained or deteriorated housing, abandoned housing, and vacant lots.

### Benefits

Much evidence has accumulated to suggest that violence is more likely to occur when the constraints are weak and the motivations are strong (Agnew 2004): The perpetrator chooses to be violent to the extent that he or she perceives that the costs are low (i.e., the violent individual probably won't get caught, but if he or she does, the punishment will be minimal) and the perceived benefits are substantial (i.e., the perpetrator will gain in an important economic, political, or psychological sense). The rational aspects of violence can be seen in the finding of Felson and Messner (1996) that many killers are motivated to commit murder to avoid being attacked by a victim they had assaulted or to avoid being prosecuted on the word of an eyewitness.

In what he calls "the seductions of crime," Jack Katz (1990) has suggested that criminal violence can have an emotional payoff. The perpetrator feels a sense of excitement and a rush of power and dominance. The murderer may "get high" on the sadism and brutality.

James A. Fox and Jack Levin (2005) have applied this conception to sadistic serial killers who torture, rape, and humiliate their victims to achieve a sense of power and dominance. Choosing to inflict pain and suffering in an "up close and personal manner," these killers seek control over their victims' lives. They exalt in the suffering they cause their victims to suffer; and they then exercise ultimate power by deciding who lives and who dies.

In the past, widespread political support for genocide has been suggested as a basis for personal costs and benefits. Brustein (1996) argued that during the 1930s many German citizens joined the Nazi party because they envisaged Nazi party membership as

a ticket to employment or career advancement in a future National Socialist Germany. In late 1930, the party used membership as an inducement to attract civil servants, by hinting that in a Nazi state civil service jobs would go only to registered Nazi Party members. (P. 163)

Similarly, it is now suggested that hate crimes offer an emotional benefit. On the basis of police arrest records, Levin and McDevitt (2002) developed a typology of hate crime motivations that suggests the majority of hate crimes are committed for the thrill by groups of teenagers or young adults. Selecting victims who are generally different in terms of race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability status, youthful perpetrators gain “bragging rights” among their peers and achieve a sense of superiority over their victims. Many other hate crime offenders have a more practical objective: Their attack is defensive in that they encourage “intruders” to move out of the neighborhood, workplace, or dormitory. Finally, a few hate crime offenders are on a mission—the intent is to eliminate members of another group from their community, their country, or the world. These mission offenders usually make a career of hatemongering, a condition that is often enhanced by membership in hate groups.

## MAJOR RESEARCH AREAS

Much of the recent sociological research into the causes and consequences of violence has concentrated on institutions such as the school and the family. As concern about school shootings and family abuse has found its way into popular culture and politics, sociologists have increasingly turned their attention to these areas. Also, because of a soaring rate of youth violence documented during the 1980s and 1990s, criminologists have sought to understand and counteract the sources of such youthful crime. Finally, the interest of sociologists in issues of war and peace, and terrorism increased substantially after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

### Juvenile Violence

From 1986 through 1992, there was a dramatic increase in the number of murders committed by teenaged boys. Then, beginning in 1993, the rate of teen homicide plummeted. In Boston, for example, there were 39 homicides committed by teenagers in 1990; by 1998, teenagers were responsible for only three murders.

The reduction in violent teenage crime has been explained by such factors as a declining use of crack

cocaine, zero-tolerance policing, and effective gun control (see Blumstein and Wallman 2000). According to a U.S. Department of Education report (Sinclair et al. 1998), during the 1996 to 1997 school year, the first in which such statistics were compiled, there were 6,093 expulsions for firearm violations in schools across the country. To counter this kind of experience, schools have become actively involved in the center of effective community efforts to reduce teen violence. High school principals adopted a zero-tolerance policy regarding students who carry firearms to school. In addition, by means of conflict-resolution programs built into the curriculum, many schools began teaching students to have empathy for victims, to control one’s anger, and to manage impulsive behavior. Finally, through athletics and other extracurricular programs, schools are increasingly providing adult supervision, guidance, and control.

Moreover, in communities where a substantial decrease in violent juvenile crime is observed, residents have become active in reestablishing a sense of community, recognizing they can make a difference in the lives of local youths. At the grassroots level, parents, teachers, psychologists, religious and business leaders, social workers, college students, and police officials worked together to take the glamour out of destructive behavior and to provide constructive activities for after-school hours. Through myriad new programs, adults provide inner-city teenagers supervision, structure, guidance, and some hope for the future (Levin 1999).

However, other problems such as bullying persist. Although long considered nothing more serious than a youthful rite of passage, bullying has recently been recognized as one of the most disturbing crimes among students. The National Association of School Psychologists estimates that 60,000 children miss school each day because they fear being bullied. Kaufman et al. (1999) report that bullying peaks in the sixth grade and is four times more likely to occur in the sixth grade than in the twelfth grade.

Bullying not only hurts its victims but also risks injuring perpetrators when victims retaliate. Painter (1999) points out that many bullying victims bring guns to school for the purpose of protecting themselves or getting even. Moreover, Fagan and Wilkinson (1998) suggest that “bullying is a precursor to stable antisocial and aggressive behavior that may endure into later adolescence and adulthood” (p. 74). The two youngsters who in April, 1999, massacred 12 students and a teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, had endured years of taunting and bullying prior to their rampage. Consequently, there are now more studies investigating how and why students bully and how their targets respond.

A source of conflict in many schools is the perceived or real problem of the biased and unfair treatment by teachers and classmates of students who are different in terms of their ethnicity, race, gender, class, religion, disability status, sexual orientation, nationality, or physical appearance. Data on the prevalence of “bullying” or harassment among

11-, 13-, and 15-year-olds from the 1998 World Health Organization survey of Health Behavior of School Children in the United States shows that 25.8 percent of these youth had been bullied because of their religion or race and 52 percent were exposed to inappropriate sexual comments or gestures (Nansel et al. 2001).

In many schools, students (mostly males) negotiate their social status in a group based on hierarchical structure consisting at the top of bullies, then of onlookers or bystanders, and at the bottom victims. Usually in the majority, onlookers who hold respect for human dignity can play an important role in dismantling this pecking order, so that bullying becomes devalued in school culture. As a result of effective antibullying programs and policies, more bystanders have come forward to report bullying among their peers. Breaking the culture of silence in many middle and high schools has helped reduce the prevalence of school shootings around the country (Newman 2004).

One explanation for increased levels of conflict and violence in schools focuses on the characteristics of the school as a social organization. In this view, schools are bureaucratic organizations based on hierarchical structure and are dominated by rules and regulations that define school activities (Brint 1998). Pedro A. Noguera (1995) suggests that many of the current problems schools experience are the products of the emphasis on maintaining order and control over students as opposed to creating a humane environment in which learning is maximized. Similarly, Hawkins et al. (1997) report that conflict is most visible in middle school and high school because these institutions are often overly managed and have too many restrictive rules and regulations, all of which suppress adolescent development toward self-organization.

## Family Violence

Violence has distinct normative elements and reflects the political and social realities of the society in which it occurs. For example, violence in a family was until recently defined as a “normal” part of family life. It took a change in societal norms and the introduction of the term *abuse* to describe the sorts of behavior that are no longer so tolerated or acceptable in our society.

However, there is still much controversy surrounding family violence. One of the reasons is the private nature of family life and the lack of support for public scrutiny over what happens “behind the closed doors” of the home. The level of privacy experienced of nuclear family life may lead to social isolation, which in turn could make members of the family more vulnerable to family violence (Laslett 1978; Williams 1992). Another explanation offered as a reason for family violence is based on the belief that parents should have power over their children and authority to choose appropriate punishments. Moreover, abuse is based on a moral evaluation, meaning that it depends on the moral judgments of people (Gelles and Straus 1979).

Early studies of family violence focused on the personality characteristics of abusive parents, abused children, and abusive and abused spouses. Because the most likely offenders were men, violence was conceptualized as a problem of individual males. However, feminist scholars moved beyond the analysis of individual characteristics and behaviors to study the macrolevel characteristics of the larger society. Concentrating primarily on how the patriarchal ideology and structure of society leads to violence, this feminist perspective addresses the pervasive sexism inherent in the norms, values, and institutions of society. Although there are several different approaches within the feminist framework, most feminists see family violence as shaped by gender and power (Dobash and Dobash 1998). On the basis of the coercive control model, domestic violence is defined as a tactic of entitlement and power, a tactic that is deeply gendered (Yllo 1998:615). However, such a model does not hold any utility for explaining child abuse, women’s abuse of men, or abuse in gay and lesbian relationships.

Another challenge is found in the need to incorporate race, class, and ethnicity as important analytical variables. Aida Hurtado (1997) demonstrates the importance of doing so by showing how gender subordination is experienced differently by white women and minority women. In particular, Hurado’s complex analysis of male coercive power allows gender subordination to be examined as women’s connection to or distance from white male power.

Resource theory conceptualizes force as a personal resource that can be used to resolve conflicts. From this perspective, force is most often a resource of “last resort,” used when all else fails (Goode 1971). Thus, economically disadvantaged parents might use physical force more than economically advantaged parents do in disciplining their children because they do not have options for sanctions that are more socially acceptable such as sending their children to their rooms or denying them the use of a computer or electronic game systems (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980).

Overall, the number of homicides of husbands and wives has declined steadily from just under 2,200 in 1976 to fewer than 800 in 2002 (Fox, Levin, and Quinet 2005). Part of the reason for the substantial reduction in domestic murder seems to involve the liberalization of divorce laws over the second half of the twentieth century (Fox et al. 2005). No-fault divorce laws have permitted couples to separate before the level of antagonism reaches violent proportions. Another factor is that the stigma associated with being an abused spouse or a divorcee has greatly declined. Besides divorce, the presence of a number of legal and social remedies and interventions for abused partners—restraining orders, police arrest procedures, hotlines, shelters, and support groups—has provided viable options to those who might, during an earlier era, have either remained in a vulnerable position or resorted to violence as a defensive reaction.

## War, Peace, and Intergroup Conflict

International conflict and violence have long been the domains of political scientists who prefer to study violent conflicts among nations. However, during the past century and into the twenty-first century, violent conflicts have occurred increasingly within nations. Improved military technology not only has made war more deadly to combatants but also significantly increased civilian casualties. Since World War II, 80 percent of all war casualties have been civilian. And most of these deaths and injuries have been inflicted by political authorities against their own people (Hauchler and Kennedy 1994).

Among the first to demonstrate interest in the area, Helen Fein (1979) employed a quantitative approach to examine the variability in Jewish victimization during the Holocaust in Europe. To account for differences in national responses, Fein used several variables such as the prewar size and visibility of the Jewish community, the intensity of prewar anti-Semitism, the extent of SS control in each country, the character of native government response, the amount of warning time, and the behavior of selected resistance movements (Fein 1979). It is noteworthy that Fein was criticized for attempting to quantify this “emotionally charged” subject (Horowitz 1980). Other sociologists argued that it was inappropriate for sociologists to study “single historical events” such as the Holocaust. Nevertheless, an increasing number of sociologists have followed the lead of Fein’s study of genocide to examine the conditions under which large-scale violence occurs.

More recently, Robin M. Williams (2003) explained the causes and consequences of violent intragroup conflict by focusing on who the actors are and how they define and differentiate themselves from their enemies. Most societies are ethnically diverse, and ethnic conflicts are at the heart of “wars within.” They are fueled by economic competition, by political manipulation of people’s fears, and by culture wars that promote ethnic identities that are distinct and opposed to one another.

Williams argues that elites try to minimize interaction among different ethnic groups so as to forestall any interdependence that might develop. In addition, elites representing dominant ethnic groups use discrimination and the power of government to suppress and minimize the influence of minority ethnic groups. Over time, the domination of minority ethnic groups leads either to the mobilization of these groups toward conflict or to an accommodation among the competing groups.

Another area of study that has drawn the interest of sociologists involves “ethnic cleansing.” Known as genocide, such acts of violence are committed with the intent of annihilating an entire group of people based on differences in their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or national origin. One of the important findings is that most recent ethnic conflicts are resolved not through large-scale confrontations but through political accommodation and negotiation (Gurr 2000). The important issue therefore

becomes how and why group conflicts escalate into violence. In response, Levin and Rabrenovic (2004) state that ethnic conflicts are not unavoidable consequences of human diversity. Rather, such conflict is constructed by political leaders and culture elites who employ violence to gain psychological, social, and economic advantage. They do so by manipulating fear of one group against another in an effort to justify the use of violence (see also Glassner 2000).

Local media also play an instrumental role in the construct of hate. When elite and media characterizations of ethnic minorities as dangerous threats amplify each other, the results can be disastrous. To illustrate the process whereby elites and the media collaborate to escalate the level of ethnic conflict, Levin and Rabrenovic (2004) cite examples of ethnic violence in Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, and India, among other places. During periods of economic instability, structural change, or political turmoil, members of the majority group often react to a threat, whether real or perceived, by turning against the members of the minority groups. Operating under a zero-sum definition of the situation (i.e., someone else’s loss is viewed as a personal gain), they try to limit the minorities’ civil rights and access to economic resources. The failure of the formal governing structures to protect the human rights of all residents and to ignore growing social inequalities become the root cause of many ethnic conflicts that explode into violence. The riots of minority youth in London in 1981 and in Paris in 2005 were products of growing segregation between the native-born white population and the native-born minority population that left minority youth without equal access to the resources of mainstream society. In their quest to absorb immigrants as fast as possible, many European societies used the policies of the welfare state to provide newcomers with minimum resources such as housing, schooling, and health care but at a lower standard and in segregated communities. These new ethnic groups also lacked political power and representation, which led them to feel as though they were second-class citizens in their own country.

In extreme forms, ethnic conflicts can lead to expelling and executing minority group members for the purpose of creating ethnically homogeneous societies as occurred in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo during the last quarter of the twentieth century.

## PUBLIC POLICY AND FUTURE RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Violence is regarded widely as a serious social problem—so serious, in fact, that policymakers have turned to social science to help them design programs to prevent or reduce violent behavior. For example, research in the area of family violence has spurred the development of many programs and services for addressing the needs of victims of violence as well as for empowering them to combat

violence on their own. Similar developments have been seen in the area of school violence, where research conducted by social scientists has informed programs and policies to reduce bullying and to implement effective conflict resolution programs in the schools (Fox et al. 2005).

Much of the violence documented in this chapter is related to structural factors and thus can only be effectively reduced by making changes in society as a whole. For example, many cities have developed programs and activities that address the causes of criminal behavior by targeting the social, political, and economic forces that foster them. As we discussed earlier, the substantial decrease in violent crime that many urban communities experienced since the mid-1990s can be partially explained by neighborhood mobilization around important crime issues as well as by an increase in the number of community-based programs and local resources that target youth and young adults, providing them with adult supervision and hope for the future (Blumstein and Wallman 2000). Similarly, the existence of a civic infrastructure consisting of independent political parties and civic organizations as well as the separation between government and religious organizations seems to help societies threatened by ethnic conflict to avert an escalation of those conflicts into destructive violence (Williams 2003).

To this point, the influence of violence research on public policy has been quite limited. It is hoped that social research in the area of violence will, in the years ahead, become even more relevant for policymakers and practitioners. The heavy reliance on the criminal justice system to deter criminal violence by incarcerating large numbers of offenders, mostly minorities, is not only costly but does not solve the problem in the long run. It appears that harsh punishment may dissuade certain adult offenders but not their juvenile counterparts.

It should be emphasized, at the same time, that the impact of social research on public policy has been limited by economic and political circumstances (Wilensky 2005). In the United States, single-issue research proposing short-term solutions has too often been supported and encouraged by a decentralized and fragmented political and economic system. In many cases, the findings of social research have been used not for policy planning purposes but only as rhetorical weapons in the public relations arsenal of politicians and government officials.

The future influence of sociology on public policy in the area of violence is, at this juncture, unclear. We can only hope that, in the years ahead, violence research will play an increasingly significant role in informing public policy and public opinion.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

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There is little doubt that environmental problems will be one of humanity's major concerns in the twenty-first century, and it is becoming apparent that sociologists can play an important role in shedding light on these problems and the steps that need to be taken to cope with them. While the study of environmental issues is an inherently interdisciplinary project, spanning the natural and social sciences as well as humanities, the crucial role of the social sciences in general and sociology in particular are increasingly recognized (e.g., Brewer and Stern 2005). This stems from growing awareness of the fact that environmental problems are fundamentally social problems: They result from human social behavior, they are viewed as problematic because of their impact on humans (as well as other species), and their solution requires societal effort. It is, therefore, not surprising that sociologists have shown growing interest in environmental issues in recent decades and that environmental sociology has become a recognized field. Yet sustained sociological investigation of environmental problems did not come easily, and is a relatively recent development in the field.

Although there was scattered sociological attention to both urban problems and natural resource issues prior to the 1970s, environmental sociology developed in that decade as sociology's own response to the emergence of

environmental problems on the public agenda. At first, sociologists tended to limit their attention to analyzing societal response to environmental problems, rather than examining the problems themselves. But as sociologists gradually paid more attention to environmental issues, some began to look beyond societal awareness of environmental problems to examine the underlying relationships between modern, industrial societies and the biophysical environments they inhabit. The result was the emergence of environmental sociology as a field of inquiry (Buttel 1987; Dunlap and Catton 1979a).

This chapter provides a necessarily selective overview of this relatively new field (see Benton 2001; Buttel and Gijswijt 2001; Goldman and Schurman 2000; Yearley 2005 for other recent reviews). We briefly discuss how and why environmental sociology represents a major departure from sociology's traditional neglect of environmental phenomena, describe the field's institutionalization, examine the key environmental foci of research in the field, and review both early and more recent research emphases in the field. Early emphases mainly involved analyses of societal awareness of environmental issues, whereas recent emphases continue this line of research but also include considerable work on the causes, impacts, and solutions of environmental problems.

## ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY AND THE DISCIPLINE

In contrast to the larger society, mainstream sociology in the 1970s was almost oblivious to the significance of environmental problems. This blindness stemmed from a long period of neglect of environmental matters, stimulated by the societal context in which sociology developed as well as its unique disciplinary traditions. The Durkheimian emphasis on explaining social phenomena only in terms of other “social facts,” plus an aversion to earlier excesses of biological and geographical “determinisms,” had led sociologists to ignore the biophysical world (Benton 1991; Dunlap and Catton 1979a). To legitimize sociology as a discipline, it was important to move away from explanations of, for example, racial and cultural differences in terms of biological and geographical factors, respectively. Yet in the process of developing distinctively social explanations for societal phenomena, our discipline replaced older determinisms with sociocultural determinism (Carolan 2005a, 2005b). For example, as recently as the late 1970s, sociologists of agriculture argued that it was inappropriate to include factors such as soil type and rainfall in explanations of soil conservation adoption or farm energy use because they were not *social* variables (Dunlap and Martin 1983).

These disciplinary traditions were strengthened by sociology’s emergence during an era of unprecedented growth and prosperity, which made limits to resource abundance and technological progress unimaginable, and increased urbanization, which reduced direct contact with the natural environment. With modern, industrialized societies appearing to be increasingly disembedded from the biophysical world, sociology came to assume that the exceptional features of *Homo sapiens*—language, technology, science, and culture more generally—made these societies “exempt” from the constraints of nature (Catton and Dunlap 1980) and thus reluctant to acknowledge the societal relevance of ecological limits (Dunlap 2002b).

Given sociology’s neglect of the biophysical environment—and tendency to equate “the environment” with the social context of the phenomenon being studied—it is not surprising that efforts to establish environmental sociology as an area of inquiry included a critique of the larger discipline’s blindness to environmental matters. Dunlap and Catton’s (1979a) effort to define and codify the field of environmental sociology was accompanied by an explication and critique of the “human exemptionalism paradigm” (HEP) on which contemporary sociology was premised. While not denying that human beings are obviously an exceptional species, these analysts argued that humans’ special skills and capabilities nonetheless fail to exempt the human species from the constraints of the biophysical environment. Consequently, Catton and Dunlap (1978, 1980) suggested that the HEP should be replaced by a more ecologically sound perspective, a “new ecological paradigm” (NEP), that acknowledges the ecosystem-dependence of human societies.

The call for mainstream sociology’s dominant paradigm to be replaced with a more ecologically sound one proved to be a rather controversial feature of environmental sociology. While the exemptionalist underpinning of mainstream sociology has been increasingly recognized (Dunlap 2002b), the call for adoption of an ecological paradigm has been criticized for allegedly deflecting efforts to apply classical and mainstream theoretical perspectives in environmental sociology (Buttel 1987, 1997). Nonetheless, environmental sociologists are producing rapidly expanding bodies of both empirical literature on the relationships between societal and environmental variables that clearly violates Durkheim’s antireductionism taboo and theoretical literature representing efforts to develop more ecologically sound theories that are not premised on the assumption of human exemptionalism. Both of these trends reflect the declining credibility of exemptionalist thinking within sociology (Dunlap 2002b).

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL FOCI OF THE FIELD

Whether defined narrowly as the study of societal-environmental relations (Dunlap and Catton 1979a, 1979b) or more broadly as covering all sociological work on environmental issues (Buttel 1987), what makes environmental sociology a distinct field is its focus on the biophysical environment. However, the environment is an enormously complex phenomenon, open to various conceptualizations and operationalizations, and this leads to diverse foci in the work of environmental sociologists (Dunlap and Michelson 2002; Redclift and Woodgate 1997). One way of making sense of this diversity draws on ecologists’ insight that the biophysical environment performs many services for human beings (Daily 1997). At the risk of oversimplification, we can sort these numerous services into three general types of functions that the environment or, more accurately, ecosystems serve for human societies (and all living species). Adopting this ecological perspective enables us to highlight the various aspects of the environment that environmental sociologists examine as well as to note some general trends in how these foci have changed over time (Dunlap 1994; Dunlap and Catton 2002).

To begin with, the environment provides us with the resources necessary for life, most critically, clean air and water, food, and shelter. Ecologists thus view the environment as providing the “sustenance base” for human societies, and we can also think of it as a “supply depot” of natural resources. Many environmental sociologists focus on issues surrounding the extraction, transport, use, and conservation of resources such as fossil fuels, forests, and fisheries. Second, in the process of consuming resources humans, like all species, produce “waste” products; indeed, humans produce a far greater quantity and variety

of waste products than do any other species. The environment must serve as a “sink” or “waste repository” for these wastes, either absorbing or recycling them into useful or at least harmless substances. When the waste products exceed an environment’s ability to absorb them, the result is pollution. A growing number of environmental sociologists examine social processes related to pollution problems, ranging from the generation of pollution to its social impacts. Finally, like all other species, humans must also have a place to live, and the environment provides our home—where we live, work, play, and travel. In the most general sense, the planet Earth provides the home for our species. Thus, the third function of the environment is to provide a “living space” or habitat for human populations and other species. Environmental sociologists have focused on a variety of living space issues, traditionally ranging from housing to urban design but more recently encompassing macrolevel issues such as the impacts of deforestation, desertification, and climate change on human settlements and habitats.

When humans overuse an environment’s ability to fulfill these three functions, “environmental problems” in the form of pollution, resource scarcities, and overcrowding and/or overpopulation are the result. Furthermore, not only must the environment serve all three functions for humans but when a given environment is used for one function its ability to fulfill the other two can be impaired. Impairment of ecosystem functions may yield more complex environmental problems. Functional incompatibilities between the living space and waste-repository functions are apparent, for example, when the use of an area for a waste site makes it unsuitable for living space. Similarly, if hazardous materials escape from a waste repository and contaminate the soil or water, the area can no longer serve as a supply depot for drinking water or for growing agricultural products. Finally, converting farmland or forests into housing subdivisions creates more living space for people, but means that the land can no longer function as a supply depot for food timber or habitat for wildlife.

Analytically separating these three functions provides insight into the evolution of environmental problems as well as the expanding foci of environmental sociology. In the 1960s and early 1970s, when awareness of environmental problems was growing rapidly in the United States, primary attention was given to air and water pollution and the importance of protecting areas of natural beauty and recreational value. Early sociological work focused on these topics (e.g., Catton 1971; Molotch and Follett 1971). The “energy crisis” of 1973–1974 highlighted the dependence of modern industrialized nations on fossil fuels, added credibility to those espousing “limits to growth” (Meadows et al. 1972), and generated sociological interest in the impacts of energy shortages and scarcity more generally (e.g., Catton 1976; Schnaiberg 1975). The living space function came to the fore in the late 1970s when it was discovered that the Love Canal neighborhood in

upstate New York was built on an abandoned chemical waste site that was leaking toxic materials, and this generated sociological attention to local environmental hazards (e.g., Levine 1982). More recently, problems stemming from functional incompatibilities at larger geographical scales, ranging from deforestation and loss of biodiversity to the truly global-level phenomena of ozone depletion and global warming, have attracted attention from sociologists (e.g., Canan and Reichman 2001; Dietz and Rosa 1997; Rudel and Roper 1997).

The above examples of how human activities are affecting the ability of the environment to serve as our supply depot, living space, and waste repository involve focusing on specific aspects of particular environments such as a given river’s ability to absorb wastes without becoming polluted. It is more accurate, however, to note that it is not “the environment” but “ecosystems” and ecological processes that provide these three functions for humans—and for all other living species. Furthermore, it is increasingly recognized that the health of entire ecosystems, including the Earth’s global ecosystem, is being jeopardized as a result of growing human demands being placed on them. Exceeding the capacity of a given ecosystem to fulfill one of the three functions may disrupt not only its ability to fulfill the other two but also its ability to continue to function at all. Whereas historically the notion that human societies face “limits to growth” was based on the assumption that we would run out of food supplies or natural resources such as oil (Meadows et al. 1972), contemporary “ecological limits” refer to the finite ability of the global ecosystem to serve all three functions simultaneously without having its own functioning impaired (see, e.g., Vitousek et al. 1997; Wackernagel et al. 2004).

The late Frederick Buttel noted on a number of occasions (Buttel 2004:333; Buttel and Gijswijt 2001:46) that researchers in the field employ overly simplistic conceptualizations of the environment, often limiting their attention to “ecological withdrawals and additions” or the supply depot and waste repository functions. Despite its simplicity, the three-function model offers major advances. First, as illustrated above, the model clarifies the characteristics and sources of environmental problems, how they change over time, and thus the expanding foci of environmental sociological research. Second, the model acknowledges the function of living space (and spatial phenomena in general), which is essential for examining the flows of resources and pollution across political boundaries in the modern world that are receiving increasing attention from environmental sociologists (Bunker 2005; Mol and Spaargaren 2005). Third, the model is consistent with conceptualizations of the biophysical environment employed in sophisticated measures of “ecological footprints” and “human appropriation of net primary production” that are increasingly used in empirical research by environmental sociologists and environmental scientists (Haberl et al. 2004).



## INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY

Sociological interest in the impacts of energy and other resource scarcities accelerated the emergence of environmental sociology as a distinct area of inquiry by heightening awareness that “the environment” was more than just another social problem, and that environmental change can indeed have societal consequences as well as the obvious fact that human activities can affect the environment. Studies of the impacts of energy shortages on society facilitated a transition from the early “sociology of environmental issues”—involving the application of standard sociological perspectives for analyzing societal responses to environmental issues—to a distinctive “environmental sociology” focused explicitly on societal-environmental relations.

The nascent environmental sociology of the 1970s was quickly institutionalized via the formation of organizations within U.S. national sociological associations. These groups provided an organizational base for the emergence of environmental sociology as a thriving area of specialization, and attracted scholars interested in all aspects of the environment, from built to natural (Dunlap and Catton 1979b, 1983). The late 1970s was a vibrant era of growth for American environmental sociology, but momentum proved difficult to sustain during the 1980s because this decade was a troublesome period for the field and social science more generally. Ironically, however, stimulated by major accidents such as those at Chernobyl in the then USSR and Bhopal in India and growing evidence of global environmental problems, interest in environmental issues from a sociological perspective was taking root internationally. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, environmental sociology was not only reinvigorated in the United States but also was being institutionalized in countries around the world and within the International Sociological Association (ISA) (Dunlap and Catton 1994; Redclift and Woodgate 1997). ISA's Research Committee on Environment and Society, RC 24, has become an especially important vehicle for facilitating the global spread of environmental sociology (Mol 2006).

## SOCIETAL AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

The emergence of “the environment” on the U.S. national agenda in the late 1960s and early 1970s led sociologists to study factors that contributed to societal awareness of environmental degradation. While there were a few early efforts to analyze the overall processes involved (e.g., Albrecht 1975), most studies focused on specific factors such as environmentalism. The environmental movement played the major role in placing environmental issues on the nation's agenda, and studies of environmentalism were a primary emphasis of early sociological work not only in

North America but also subsequently in Europe, South America, and Asia. The growth of public awareness and concern stimulated by environmental activists and personal experience with degradation also received a good deal of attention. These two emphases have continued over time, while in recent decades attention to the roles played by the media and especially science in generating societal attention to environmental problems has increased. These strands of research have contributed to a broader concern with understanding how environmental problems are “socially constructed.”

## Environmentalism

In the United States, the modern environmental movement evolved out of the older conservation movement and the social activism of the 1960s, and sociologists helped document this evolution. Early studies focused heavily on the characteristics of people who joined national environmental organizations, finding that organizations such as the Sierra Club drew members who were above average in socioeconomic status, predominately white, and primarily urban. While this pattern led to charges of “elitism,” it was noted that most voluntary and political organizations have similar membership profiles and that environmental activists were hardly economic “elites” (Morrison and Dunlap 1986).

Sociologists also studied the organizational characteristics of large national organizations such as the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council. Attention was given to their strategies and tactics, especially their efforts to influence national policy making via lobbying and litigation and their successful use of direct mail advertising to recruit a large but only nominally involved membership base (Mitchell 1979). These organizations grew rapidly in the late 1960s and early 1970s and ended up following a typical pattern observed for social movement organizations: As they became larger and more successful in the political arena, they also became more bureaucratic, professionalized, unresponsive to their memberships, willing to compromise, and conservative in their tactics (Mertig, Dunlap, and Morrison 2002).

One result is that by the 1980s, as more people discovered environmental hazards in their communities, a large number of local, grassroots organizations formed independently of the mainstream national organizations (Szasz 1994). The discovery that a disproportionate share of environmental hazards were located in minority and low-income communities led to charges of environmental racism and injustice (Bullard 1990), the development of an “environmental justice frame” (Capek 1993) and the emergence of an “environmental justice” movement that gradually merged grassroots environmentalism centered in both minority and white, blue-collar communities (Pellow and Brulle 2005). Environmental justice organizations have been joined by a vast array of other local environmental groups with a range of foci, including land and wildlife

protection, that display diverse organizational forms and are sometimes linked to national organizations or belong to loose coalitions and networks (Andrews and Edwards 2005).

Besides describing and analyzing the organizational complexity and dynamics of contemporary environmentalism, sociologists have conducted long-term historical analyses of the growth of conservation/environmental organizations, both nationally (McLaughlin and Khawaja 2000) and locally (Andrews and Edwards 2005), and of the increasingly diverse set of environmentally relevant discourses to document the evolution of modern environmentalism out of traditional conservation concerns (Brulle 2000).

Also receiving a good deal of attention has been the emergence of environmental movements and Green parties in Europe (Rootes 2003) and, more recently, in Asia and Latin America (see Redclift and Woodgate 1997:pt. III). Transnational environmental activism is receiving increasing attention, including studies on topics such as how environmentalism in less-developed nations is influenced by international pressures (Barbosa 2000), how relations between transnational environmental organizations are influenced by ties to international governmental organizations such as UN agencies (Caniglia 2001), and the factors that affect transnational environmental organizations' decisions to fund debt-for-nature "swaps" in less-developed nations (Lewis 2000). Some studies suggest that environmentalism is becoming a potent political force within many nations as well as at the international level (Shandra et al. 2004), whereas others are more cautious in their assessment of the potential influence of environmentalism at the global level (Frickel and Davidson 2004).

Within the United States, the increasing mobilization of the conservative movement as an antienvironmental countermovement has begun to receive some attention (Austin 2002), particularly the degree to which conservative think tanks have been successful in influencing U.S. environmental policy making (McCright and Dunlap 2003). The effectiveness of conservatives in opposing American environmentalism was signaled by the recent release of a controversial report by two self-avowed environmentalists titled *The Death of Environmentalism* (Schellenberger and Nordhaus 2004). The authors argue that mainstream environmental organizations focus too narrowly on solutions for specific problems such as global warming while failing to link their goals to widely held values, and thus fail to counter conservatives' success in tying their antienvironmental agenda to traditional American values (see the symposium on the controversy edited by Cohen 2006b).

The inability of environmentalists to halt the weakening of federal environmental regulations by the current administration (Kennedy 2005) has highlighted the ill health, if not moribund state, of environmentalism in a post-9/11 era, and it is unclear if the movement will be able to regain the momentum of earlier decades. Sociologists are actively involved in analyzing the state of environmentalism and

offering prescriptions for its resurgence, including issuing calls for more active support for technological innovations to ameliorate environmental problems by major organizations (Cohen 2006a), for a stronger coalition between labor unions and environmentalists (Gould, Lewis, and Roberts 2004), and for a fundamental restructuring of environmental organizations and their funding (Brulle, forthcoming).

## Environmental Awareness and Concern

As environmental problems gained a foothold on the public agenda, both public opinion pollsters and social scientists began conducting surveys to examine levels of public awareness of environmental problems and support for environmental protection efforts. Initial efforts were confined to documenting growing levels of public awareness and concern for the environment among residents of the United States and other wealthy nations and to examining variation in "environmental concern" across differing sectors of society—by levels of education, age, and residence, for example (Albrecht 1975). Syntheses of available findings indicated that age, education, and political ideology were the best predictors, with young adults, the well-educated and political liberals being more concerned about the environment than their counterparts. Urban residents and women were also sometimes found to be more environmentally concerned than were rural residents and men, although these relationships often varied with the measure of environmental concern employed (Jones and Dunlap 1992).

Longitudinal studies have also been conducted, tracking trends in public opinion on environmental issues over extended time periods (Dunlap 2002a). A few studies examined correlates of environmental concern with longitudinal data, finding them to be relatively stable over long periods of time (Jones and Dunlap 1992). However, the lack of a public backlash against what is widely seen as the antienvironmental orientation of the Bush administration (Kennedy 2005), comparable with that which occurred during the first term of the Reagan administration, has led to speculation that concerns over national security in a post-9/11 era may have fundamentally altered Americans' concern with environmental quality (Brechin and Freeman 2004).

A more recent contribution of sociologists has been to extend work on environmental attitudes to the international level. A key finding is that citizen concern for the environment is not limited to wealthy nations as often assumed but rather has diffused throughout most of the world (Dunlap and Mertig 1995; Brechin 1999). These studies challenge the notion that concern for environmental protection is a "postmaterialist" value that emerges only when nations become relatively affluent and citizens' basic needs are reasonably well met.

Although the above studies have provided useful information on the distribution and evolution of environmental

concern, they often employ single-item indicators or other simple measures and shed little light on the complexity of such concern. Gradually, more attention has been paid to the conceptualization and measurement of environmental concern, and sociologists and other scholars have developed a wide range of measures of this concept (Dunlap and Jones 2002). In particular, the “new ecological paradigm (NEP) scale,” which measures basic beliefs such as the existence of ecological limits and the importance of maintaining a balance of nature, has become the most widely used measure of environmental concern, employed in scores of studies worldwide (see Dunlap et al. 2000 for a revised NEP scale).

Other sociological contributions have been the development of a norm-activation model of environmental concern and behavior, clarification of the attitude-behavior relationship in the environmental domain, and the creation of a comprehensive value-belief-norm theory of environmental attitudes and activism (Stern et al. 1999). The latter has become an influential theoretical framework for helping guide the current emphasis on understanding the value basis of environmental concern (Dietz, Fitzgerald, and Shwom 2005).

In short, sociological studies of environmental concern have documented high levels of public awareness and concern over environmental quality, a crucial aspect of the emergence of environment as a social problem. These studies have shown that, unlike most social problems, environmental problems have had considerable staying power (Dunlap 2002a). It remains to be seen if this long-term trend will be fundamentally altered by 9/11 (Brechin and Freeman 2004).

## Media and Science

It is widely assumed that the media play a vital role in setting the policy agenda, and sociologists among others have examined the role of media coverage in generating societal attention to environmental problems. In general, it has been found that newspaper coverage of environmental issues increased dramatically throughout the late 1960s and reached an early peak at the time of the first Earth Day in 1970, presumably contributing to the concomitant rise in public concern during the same period (Schoenfeld et al. 1979). More recently, Mazur (1998) has shown how changing patterns of media coverage of global environmental problems such as ozone depletion and global warming appear to have influenced the waxing and waning of attention given to such problems by the public and policymakers. Also, Dispensa and Brulle (2003) have documented how U.S. media coverage conveys more scientific uncertainty regarding anthropogenic climate change than does that of other advanced nations—presumably due to the greater influence of the petroleum industry in the United States.

It was common for sociologists to credit Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and other scientific contributions in

accounting for the rapid emergence of societal attention to environmental problems in the 1960s. Mitchell (1979) highlighted the dual emphasis on science and litigation in newer environmental organizations such as the Environmental Defense Fund and the Natural Resources Defense Council. However, a detailed analysis of the significant role played by science in environmental issues has emerged as a major emphasis in environmental sociology only in the past decade or so. Analysts such as Yearley (2005), for example, have emphasized that the environmental movement's heavy reliance on science is a mixed blessing for several reasons: (1) demands for scientific proof can be used to stall action, particularly by unsympathetic politicians; (2) the probabilistic and tentative nature of scientific evidence falls short of the definitive answers lay people and policymakers seek; and (3) reliance on scientific claims makes environmentalists vulnerable to counterclaims issued by “skeptical scientists” supported by industry. Such insights have led environmental sociologists to focus more broadly on the role of environmental science in generating societal interest in environmental issues, ranging from analyses of how lay persons work to document the deleterious health impacts of local pollution (Brown 1997) to the role of experts in generating consensus on the need to take action to ameliorate the thinning of the ozone layer (Canan and Reichman 2001).

## Social Construction of Environmental Problems and the Constructivist-Realist Debate

Sociologists have long argued that conditions do not become social “problems” unless they are defined as such by claims makers, who are then successful in having their definitions publicized by the media, legitimized by policymakers and thus placed onto the public agenda. Environmental sociologists have applied this “social constructivist” perspective to a wide range of environmental problems and to “environmental quality” more generally, highlighting the crucial roles played by environmental activists, scientists, and policy entrepreneurs (Yearley 1991). Some have synthesized relevant work on environmentalism, environmental science, media attention, and public opinion into detailed models of the social construction of environmental problems and, in the process, helped explain how environmental quality has remained a significant social issue for over three decades (Hannigan 1995).

Constructivist work demonstrates that environmental problems do not simply emerge from changes in objective conditions, scientific evidence is seldom sufficient for establishing conditions as problematic, and the framing of problems (e.g., as local or global) is often consequential (Yearley 2005)—representing a vital sociological contribution. However, in the 1990s some constructivists followed postmodern fads and “deconstructed” not only environmental problems and controversies but also “the environment” (or, more typically, “nature”) itself. Proclamations that “there is no singular ‘nature’ as such,

only a diversity of contested natures” (Macnaghten and Urry 1998:1) were not uncommon (e.g., Greider and Garkovich 1994). This provoked a reaction from environmental sociologists in the “realist camp,” who argued that while one can deconstruct the concept of nature, an obvious human (and culturally bound) construction, this hardly challenges the existence of the global ecosystem and by implication various manifestations of ecosystem change construed as “problems” (Dunlap and Catton 1994). Realist critics further argued that a “strong constructivist” approach that ignores the likely validity of competing environmental claims slips into relativism, undermines environmental science and plays into the hands of its critics, precludes meaningful examination of societal-environmental relations seen as fundamental to environmental sociology, and at least implicitly resurrects the disciplinary tradition of treating the biophysical environment as insignificant (Benton 2001; Dickens 1996; Murphy 2002).

In response, defenders of social constructivism replied that they were not denying the reality of environmental problems, as their postmodern rhetoric sometimes suggested, but were simply problematizing environmental claims and knowledge (Burningham and Cooper 1999; Yearley 2002). In eschewing relativism in favor of “mild” or “contextual” constructivism (e.g., Hannigan 1995), most constructivists have moved toward common ground with their realist colleagues. The latter, in turn, have moved toward a “critical realist” perspective that, although firmly grounded on acceptance of a reality independent of human understanding, recognizes that scientific (and other) knowledge is imperfect and evolving (Carolan 2005a, 2005b). The result is that the “realist-constructivist battles” of the 1990s are subsiding, and environmental sociologists continue to make use of constructivist concepts such as framing to shed light on environmental controversies without slipping into relativism (e.g., Capek 1993; Shriver and Kennedy 2005).

## CURRENT RESEARCH EMPHASES

The foregoing work on societal awareness of environmental problems can be technically considered as the sociology of environmental issues, but in recent decades it has become common to find research that clearly involves investigations of societal-environmental interactions or relations (Gramling and Freudenburg 1996). While sometimes involving examinations of perceptions and definitions of environmental conditions held by differing interests, such work is at least implicitly and more often explicitly “realist” in orientation—and clearly ignores the Durkheimian dictum that social facts be explained only by other social facts that hampered early environmental sociology (Dunlap and Martin 1983). Rather than problematizing environmental claims, this work typically investigates how changing environmental conditions (often in interaction with social factors) produce societal impacts or, more

commonly, how social factors affect environmental conditions.<sup>1</sup> Although space constraints prevent us from providing a comprehensive review of such work, we highlight environmental sociologists’ contributions to three particularly important topics: the sources of environmental problems, the impacts of such problems, and the solutions to these problems.

## Sources of Environmental Problems

Given that environmental sociology emerged in response to increased recognition of environmental problems, it is not surprising that a central concern of the field has been to explain the sources of environmental degradation and why such degradation appears endemic to modern industrial societies. Early work often involved analyses and critiques of the rather simplistic views of the causes of environmental degradation that predominated in the popular literature, particularly monocausal explanations highlighting population growth emphasized by Paul Ehrlich or technological development stressed by Barry Commoner. The ecological complex or POET model (highlighting relations among population, technology, social organization and the environment) was used to explicate the competing explanations and point out the limitations of their narrow foci (Dunlap and Catton 1979b, 1983).

The most influential analysis was offered by Schnaiberg (1980), who provided a cogent critique of the emphases on population growth, technological developments, and materialistic consumers as the key sources of environmental degradation. Schnaiberg’s alternative “treadmill of production” model drew on a range of neo-Marxist and other political-economy perspectives to offer a sophisticated alternative that stresses the inherent need of market-based firms to grow, to replace costly labor with advanced technologies, and the inevitable increase in resources used as inputs in expanding production processes. He further clarified how a powerful coalition of capital, state, and labor develops in support of continued growth, making it difficult if not impossible for environmental advocates to halt the resulting “treadmill.”

Because the treadmill presents a compelling analysis of how and why increasing levels of environmental degradation inevitably accompany the expansion of capitalism, it has an inherent “face validity” that makes it appealing to environmental sociologists (Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004). Yet despite this appeal, it has proven difficult to test empirically, particularly on a macrolevel, and has been used primarily to analyze localized opposition to treadmill processes (Buttel 2004). It has been used, for example, to explain the lack of success of local recycling programs and environmental campaigns (Gould, Schnaiberg, and Weinberg 1996; Pellow 2002; Weinberg, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2000), and evoked a rebuttal in the case of recycling (Schnaiberg 2003). At this point, the appeal of the treadmill model rests heavily on the fact that the growth of capitalism has been accompanied,

particularly at the national and global levels, by increasing levels of environmental degradation (York 2004).

Finer-grained analyses of the linkages between economic activity and environmental degradation are needed to examine the validity of the treadmill model's assumption of an inevitable relationship between the two. Two examples of such analyses include Freudenburg's (2005) work suggesting that tiny fractions of the American industrial economy, often single plants within an industry, account for an enormously disproportionate share of pollution, and work by Grant and his colleagues (Grant and Jones 2003; Grant, Jones, and Bergesen 2002) showing that large chemical plants and those that are subsidiaries of other companies account for a disproportionate share of toxic releases. In addition, growing recognition of the importance of consumption in contemporary societies (Carolan 2004; Shove and Warde 2002; Spaargaren 2003; Yearley 2005) raises questions about the treadmill model's dismissal of consumer behavior.

The integration of the treadmill model with another political economy perspective, world systems theory (WST), is needed to advance our understanding of the relationship between economic globalization and environmental degradation. According to Wallerstein (1974), the modern world system emerged in the early 1500s and is comprised of three structural positions: core, semiperiphery, and periphery. While the structure of the system has been stable since its genesis, which nations occupy each of the three positions can change somewhat over time. Core nations tend to specialize in profitable manufacturing, whereas peripheral nations tend to provide raw materials and cheap labor for both core and, increasingly, semiperipheral nations (Burns, Kick, and Davis 2003). Although ignored in the original formulation of the theory, environmental issues have attracted increasing attention from WST researchers (Roberts and Grimes 2002). The late Stephen Bunker, who pioneered the application of WST to environmental questions in his path-breaking work on resource extraction in the Amazon (Bunker 1985), has noted the difficulties as well as benefits of merging the insights of the treadmill model with those of WST (Bunker 2005). While the time is ripe for following Bunker's lead, WST theorists largely ignore the insights offered by the treadmill model (Roberts and Grimes 2002) and treadmill proponents continue to ignore the insights of WST (Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004).

The rapid growth of work on environmental issues by WST proponents in the past decade has included both long-term historical analyses of environmental degradation (Chew 2001) and the role of ecological factors in capitalist development (Moore 2003), and a spate of cross-national empirical studies investigating the relationship between countries' positions in the world system and, for example, national levels of deforestation (Burns et al. 2003), CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Roberts and Grimes 1997), and ecological footprints (Jorgenson 2003). These large-scale, cross-national studies—typically finding that core nations contribute disproportionately to global levels of environmental degradation—complement more narrowly focused analyses

of the export of both hazardous wastes (Frey 2001) and polluting industries (Frey 2003) from core to peripheral nations, as well as the export of natural resources from the peripheral to core nations (Bunker 1985; 2005).<sup>2</sup> Finally, Barbosa's work (2000) sheds light on how the world system not only encourages the exploitation of the Brazilian Amazon but also weakens efforts to protect it.

Adherents of WST have offered vital insights into the sources of environmental degradation. However, they must do more than demonstrate that world system position has a significant effect in regression equations predicting various forms of environmental degradation. Studies that examine patterns of environmental degradation *within* differing sectors of the world system (Burns et al. 2003) offer an advance, but more work on less-developed nations that clarify how involvement in the world capitalist system stimulates treadmill processes (e.g., privatization of natural resources) is needed—including attention to the role of international institutions such as the World Bank in expanding global capitalism, even under the guise of sustainable development (Goldman 2005).

Ironically, given the dismissal by Schnaiberg and many other sociologists of the perspectives of Ehrlich and Commoner, a recent alternative to the treadmill and WST models draws explicitly from the "IPAT equation" (holding that environmental impact is a function of population, technology, and affluence) that evolved from debates between the two ecologists. IPAT is isomorphic with the POET model developed by sociological human ecologists and used by early environmental sociologists (Dunlap 1994; Dunlap, Lutzenhiser, and Rosa 1994). Thus, the derivative "STIRPAT" (or "stochastic impacts by regression on population, affluence, and technology") model developed by Dietz and Rosa (1994) is rooted in what Buttel (1987) termed the "new human ecology" perspective in environmental sociology (see Benton 2001 for an updated overview of work representing this perspective).

The STIRPAT model provides a statistically rigorous technique for empirically examining the relative contributions of potential sources of environmental degradation, including the economic variables central to political economy models, and thus offers an improvement over IPAT (York, Rosa, and Dietz 2003b). An early STIRPAT analysis of national-level CO<sub>2</sub> emissions found that population and affluence explained cross-national variation extremely well (Dietz and Rosa 1997), giving some credibility to the neo-Malthusian perspective (e.g., Catton 1980, 1987) that has generally been disregarded in the field. A recent and more sophisticated STIRPAT analysis of cross-national variation in ecological footprints (a comprehensive measure of ecological load encompassing the three functions of the environment noted earlier) again found population (size and age distribution) to be the most important contributor to national-level footprints, although environmental conditions such as land mass and latitude (reflecting climate variation) and economic variables such as affluence also have an effect (York, Rosa, and Dietz 2003a).

While the STIRPAT model helps provide great insight into the sources of environmental degradation, it will likely be subjected to criticism (in part because its emphasis on the importance of population may prove unpalatable to some environmental sociologists) and refinement. The “human ecology” perspective on which it builds is a broad orienting framework—calling attention to the ecological embeddedness of human societies—rather than a coherent theoretical perspective (Dietz and Rosa 1994),<sup>3</sup> and the degree to which “ecological theory” can be directly applied to *Homo sapiens* remains a problematic and contentious issue (e.g., Freese 1997). While a strength of the STIRPAT model is that it can incorporate an endless range of variables, including those suggested by alternative theoretical perspectives, the selection of predictor variables beyond indicators of population and affluence thus far appears to be rather ad hoc (compare, e.g., Dietz and Rosa 1997 with York et al. 2003a, 2003b). This is important because we can expect to see varying conclusions drawn from studies that incorporate differing variables into the model, as suggested by Shandra et al. (2004). Future work with STIRPAT might benefit from the concepts of “societal metabolism” and “colonization of nature” employed by Fischer-Kowalski and colleagues (arguably the leading exponents of a human ecological perspective in Europe), as well as from the examples of in-depth longitudinal studies of the environmental impacts of specific nations guided by those concepts (e.g., Fischer-Kowalski and Amann 2001; Fischer-Kowalski and Haberl 1997; Haberl and Krausmann 2001).

The recent rapid development of theoretically and empirically sophisticated analyses of the sources of environmental degradation, particularly quantitative, cross-national studies, means that knowledge is evolving rapidly. It is not surprising that studies differ in findings and conclusions when they use differing samples of nations as well as varying indicators of an array of predictor variables, to say nothing of focusing on differing forms of environmental degradation. Also, there is a fundamental difference in logic between, for example, Jorgenson’s (2003) effort to demonstrate that world system position is the key factor influencing nations’ ecological footprints and York et al.’s (2003a) effort to explain variation in national footprints as fully as possible by employing a wide range of variables. We can expect considerable debate as well as eventual progress, especially if proponents of differing theoretical perspectives begin to focus on the same topics, in developing improved understanding of the sources of environmental degradation. Clearly, the field has come a long way since the early efforts to clarify debates over the key sources of such degradation (Dunlap and Catton 1979b, 1983; Schnaiberg 1980).

### Impacts of Environmental Problems

As noted earlier, environmental sociology was just emerging at the time of the 1973–1974 energy crisis, so it

is not surprising that identifying real as well as potential social impacts of energy and other natural resources was emphasized in this early period. While diverse impacts—from regional migration to consumer lifestyles—were investigated, heavy emphasis was placed on investigating the “equity” impacts of both energy shortages and the policies designed to ameliorate them (Rosa, Machlis, and Keating 1988). A general finding was that both the problems and policies often had regressive impacts, with the lower socioeconomic strata bearing a disproportionate cost due to rising energy costs (Schnaiberg 1975).

Equity has been a persistent concern in environmental sociology, and researchers gradually shifted their attention to the distribution of exposure to environmental hazards (ranging from air and water pollution to hazardous wastes). Numerous studies have generally found that both lower socioeconomic strata and minority populations are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards (Brulle and Pellow 2006), and clarifying the relative importance of income and race-ethnicity has begun to receive attention (Szasz and Meuser 2000). While these findings have played a key role in generating attention to “environmental racism” and stimulating efforts to achieve “environmental justice” (Pellow and Brulle 2005), there are many methodological challenges to be overcome if researchers are to provide stronger documentation of environmental injustice (Saha and Mohai 2005; Bevc, Marshall, and Picou 2006).

At a broader level, international equity is attracting the attention of environmental sociologists such as WST researchers investigating the export of hazardous wastes and polluting industries from wealthy to poor nations, the exploitation of Third World resources by multinational corporations, and the disproportionate contribution of wealthy nations to many global-level problems—while the consequent hurdles these phenomena pose for international cooperation has also received attention (Redclift and Sage 1998). Mounting evidence of the disproportionate impact of environmental problems on peripheral nations and the lower strata within most nations calls into question Beck’s (1992) “Risk Society” thesis that modern environmental risks transcend class boundaries (Marshall 1999).

Sociologists have not limited themselves to investigating the distributional impacts of environmental problems, and studies of communities exposed to technological or human-made hazards offer particularly rich portrayals of the diverse impacts caused by environmental and technological hazards. Whereas natural disasters—such as floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes—have been found to produce a therapeutic response in which communities unite in efforts to help victims, repair damage, and reestablish life as it was before the disaster struck, technologically induced disasters (particularly toxic releases) have a corrosive effect on community life (Freudenburg 1997; Kroll-Smith, Couch, and Levine 2002). Although a putative hazard may appear obvious to some residents, the ambiguities involved in detecting and assessing such hazards often generate a pattern of intense conflict among different

community groups (Shriver and Kennedy 2005). In many cases, such conflicts have resulted in a long-term erosion of community life as well as exacerbation of the victims' personal traumas stemming from their exposure to the hazards (Kroll-Smith et al. 2002).

Even when there is general agreement among residents concerning the impact of a disaster, there can be long-term socioeconomic damage to the community and psychological stress to its residents, as illustrated by longitudinal work on the impact of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska (Picou et al. 2004). In the aftermath of such disasters, three factors tend to impede recovery and contribute to long-term psychological stress and community damage: (1) perceptions of governmental failure; (2) uncertainty regarding the mental and physical health of victims; and (3) protracted litigation (Marshall, Picou, and Schlichtmann 2004). For the plaintiffs of Cordova, Alaska, the litigation process following the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill served as the strongest source of psychological stress and community damage (Picou et al. 2004).

It has been argued recently that the social-psychological distinction between natural and technological disasters is losing its empirical import, especially with the recent emergence of a third type of disaster—terrorism (Marshall, Picou, and Gill 2003; Webb 2002). Indeed, the blurring of the distinction is suggested by anecdotal evidence indicating that Hurricane Katrina is perceived as a natural disaster (storm surge damage along the Gulf Coast), technological disaster (breached levee system causing flooding in New Orleans), and a case of environmental injustice (low-income people disproportionately trapped by rising flood waters in New Orleans). Such ambiguities indicate the need for fresh perspectives in sociological work on hazards and disasters. More generally, the rising incidences of human exposure to environmental hazards and technological disasters, particularly as less-developed (semi-peripheral and peripheral) nations experience more industrial growth and/or resource exploitation, suggests that environmental sociologists will pay increasing attention to the impacts (as well as the sources) of environmental degradation.

## Solutions to Environmental Problems

Environmental sociologists have typically focused more attention on the causes and impacts of environmental problems than on their solutions, although the situation has changed in the past decade. Akin to their analyses of causes, early work by environmental sociologists often involved explications and critiques of predominant approaches to solving environmental problems. Heberlein (1974) noted the predilection of the United States for solving environmental problems via a "technological fix," and then analyzed the relative strengths and weaknesses of voluntary and regulatory approaches. Other sociologists (e.g., Dunlap et al. 1994) subsequently identified three broad types of "social fixes" implicit in policy approaches: (1) the cognitive (or knowledge) fix relying on information

and persuasion to stimulate behavioral change; (2) a structural fix employing laws and regulations to mandate behavioral change; and (3) a behavioral fix using incentives and disincentives to encourage behavioral change.

In the 1970s and 1980s environmental sociologists, along with other behavioral scientists, conducted a variety of studies evaluating the efficacy of these differing strategies, particularly for energy conservation (Rosa et al. 1988). Sociological analyses emphasized the degree to which energy (and other resource) consumption is affected by factors such as building construction and transportation systems, and thus the limitations of educational and information programs for achieving conservation (Lutzenhiser 1993; Shove and Warde 2002). Nonetheless, the changing regulatory climate of recent decades has generated renewed interest in voluntaristic approaches to environmental policy, and Tom Dietz and Paul Stern have recently led a comprehensive examination of environmental policy approaches via the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and the resulting volume (Dietz and Stern 2002) provides an excellent update of relevant work by environmental sociologists and other social scientists.

By the 1990s sociological interest in environmental policy took a quantum leap forward as environmental sociologists in Northern Europe began to analyze what appeared to be significant environmental amelioration within their nations. Originally building on models of industrial ecology, which suggest that the modernization of industry can permit expanding production with decreasing levels of material input and pollution output, proponents of "ecological modernization" gradually moved beyond technologically driven explanations of environmental progress. New forms of collaboration between government, industry, and civil society were seen as institutionalizing an "ecological rationality" that not only tempers the excesses of traditional economic decision making but also stimulates the development of a "green capitalism" that purportedly marries the pursuit of environmental protection with the power of the market (e.g., Mol and Sonnenfeld 2000; Mol and Spaargaren 2000). In part because its acceptance of the presumed inevitability of capitalist expansion makes it compatible with currently hegemonic neoliberal economic ideology, ecological modernization theory (EMT) has become a leading perspective within environmental sociology—particularly in Europe.

Not only do proponents of EMT view the relationship between capitalism and environmental quality quite differently than do adherents of political economy perspectives but also their efforts to theorize processes of environmental improvement have led to a major revision in environmental sociology's traditional preoccupation with explaining environmental degradation (Buttel 2003). It is therefore not surprising that major debates have ensued over the validity of ecological modernization theory. American scholars from various theoretical perspectives have issued critiques, particularly dealing with the methodological inadequacies and resulting limitations of empirical research purportedly

documenting cases of ecological modernization. These include EMT's emphasis on institutional change rather than actual environmental improvements; its focus on atypical plants, corporations, and industries selected to illustrate environmental improvements; its lack of generalizability beyond a small number of European nations; and its failure to recognize that environmental improvements in these nations result from increased use of poorer nations as supply depots and waste repositories (Bunker 1996; Goldman 2002; Schnaiberg, Pellow, and Weinberg 2002; York 2004; York and Rosa 2003).

Although it initially appeared that such critiques would foster serious debate over the validity of EMT and especially its applicability outside of Northern Europe (Mol and Spaargaren 2002), most recently the leading proponents of EMT have retreated into a postmodernish stance emphasizing "the limitations of empirical studies in closing theoretical debates" (Mol and Spaargaren 2005:94). However, given the recent growth of cross-national empirical studies in environmental sociology, surely the best way to resolve theoretical debates and establish the generalizability of theoretical claims is for the contestants to reach agreement concerning key variables, appropriate measures, and reasonable samples and then to empirically test theoretically derived hypotheses—as suggested by Fisher and Freudenburg (2001). Thus far it has fallen primarily to American scholars to provide empirical, cross-national tests of EMT, and preliminary results are at best mixed. Fisher and Freudenburg's (2004) claim of some support for expectations partially derived from EMT has generated an exchange over the adequacy of their methodological analysis (Fisher and Freudenburg 2006; York and Rosa 2006). Likewise, investigations of the existence of an environmental Kuznets curve (an inverted U-shaped relationship between affluence and environmental degradation, indicating that degradation increases as nations develop economically but then declines once a reasonable level of affluence is reached), a central expectation from EMT, has generated conflicting evidence (Burns et al. 2003; Ehrhardt-Martinez, Crenshaw, and Jenkins 2002; Fisher-Kowalski and Amann 2001; Roberts and Grimes 1997; Rudel 1998; York et al. 2003a, 2003b).

Despite the dubious evidence for ecological modernization, we believe it deserves continued testing, particularly in the United States. While contemporary U.S. environmental policy, which might be construed as ecological *demodernization*, represents a major anomaly for EMT, the theory may offer insights into why and how some local governments and a few corporations in the United States appear to be taking steps in accordance with EMT expectations despite a federal government that is widely seen as antienvironmental (Kennedy 2005). More generally, EMT has become just one strand of a larger recent effort within environmental sociology to contribute to an understanding of processes of "environmental reform" (Buttel 2003) and "environmental governance" (Davidson and Frickel 2004), topics once ceded to political science and economics.

Perhaps the most significant sociological contribution in this vein outside of EMT has been research conducted by proponents of the world civil society (WCS) perspective, research employing sophisticated quantitative techniques such as event history analysis to demonstrate the global spread of norms concerning appropriate governmental responsibilities—including environmental protection. Emphasizing the role of intergovernmental organizations, transnational nongovernmental organizations, international treaties, and other vehicles of diffusion, WCS researchers have documented the global spread of governmental laws and agencies designed to protect environmental quality or "environmental regimes" (e.g., Meyer et al. 1997; Frank, Hironaka, and Schofer 2000).

In response to criticism that WCS research documents institutional and policy changes but not changes in environmental conditions (Buttel 2000), a recent study reports that institutionalization of a global environmental regime is related to declining rates of CO<sub>2</sub> and chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) emissions (Schofer and Hironaka 2005). However, while there has been an absolute decrease in global CFC emissions, reflecting the fact that there were economically attractive technological alternatives to CFCs, the study finds only a slowing in the *rate of growth* of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Given that data on global ecological footprints suggest the need for declines in overall levels of environmental degradation (Wackernagel et al. 2004), a mere slowing in the rate of increase of degradation may be inadequate for avoiding the possibility of "overshoot" raised by Catton (1980) a quarter century ago. Thus, it is unclear whether the global diffusion of an environmental regime touted by WCS proponents, a process compatible with EMT's claim of a global trend toward ecological modernization (Mol 2001), will prove adequate for halting continued degradation (Goldman 2002). This is particularly the case now that the United States, once a pioneer in terms of environmental protection, has arguably become the major obstacle to the effective implementation of a global environmental regime (Kennedy 2005), at the very time rapid industrialization of nations such as China and India makes the need for such a regime more crucial than ever.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

As the foregoing overview of major emphases and trends suggests, environmental sociology has not only become well established internationally, but is experiencing a period of intellectual growth and ferment. The realism-constructivism debates have subsided, and the realist underpinnings of the field are once again firmly in place (even as social-constructivist analyses continue to provide vital insights), but new debates have opened up—particularly over two key foci of the field. Understanding the sources of environmental degradation is the subject of more research than ever, and increasingly sophisticated empirical analyses are shedding light on the relative



adequacy of various perspectives, especially those derived from political economy and human ecology, to explain the primary driving forces of such degradation. At the same time, the internationalization of environmental sociology has opened a debate over the inevitability of environmental degradation, with proponents of EMT (complemented by WCS studies) arguing that significant progress can be made by modernizing industrial societies and that the field should give more attention to processes of environmental improvement and reform.

While we can expect spirited theoretical debates among the proponents of the various perspectives, our hope is that efforts will be made to design rigorous empirical studies

that will help resolve apparent and often real inconsistencies and contradictions. The effort of Roberts, Parks, and Vasquez (2004) to reconcile divergent conclusions produced by a WST analysis (Roberts 1996) and a WCS analysis (Frank 1999) of the key factors influencing nations to ratify international environmental treaties via a more comprehensive explanatory model is a good example. If environmental sociology is to make valuable contributions to efforts to deal with the enormous problems of environmental degradation facing humankind in the twenty-first century, the field must develop a solid base of theoretically informed but empirically verified knowledge.

## PART VII

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### THE USES OF SOCIOLOGY

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## APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

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Applied sociology is the oldest and most general term for what Lester F. Ward (1903) identified more than 100 years ago as “the means and methods for the artificial improvement of social conditions on the part of man and society as conscious and intelligent agents” (p. vii). Applied sociology uses sociological knowledge and research skills to gain empirically based knowledge to inform decision makers, clients, and the general public about social problems, issues, processes, and conditions so that they might make informed choices and improve the quality of life (Rossi and Whyte 1983; Steele, Scarisbrick-Hauser, and Hauser 1999). In its broadest sense applied sociology encompasses evaluation research, needs assessment, market research, social indicators, and demographics. It would also include directed sociological research in medicine, mental health, complex organizations, work, education, and the military to mention but a few.

Today, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this concept of applied sociology fits nicely with the National Institutes of Health’s (Zerhouni 2003) and the National Institute of Mental Health’s (2000) new funding initiatives in translational research, which require that scientists tie their research to practical applications (Dingfelder 2005). Translational research aims at converting basic biological and behavioral science research into forms that can address pressing issues in health care diagnosis, treatment, and delivery. By extension, this means that applied sociological research will produce descriptions, analyses, and findings that can be translated into ideas and lessons learned from previous activities or programs to be used by action organizations, including citizens groups, foundations,

business, labor, and government. It is likely that in the near future, more public and private funding will continue to shift from basic to translational or applied research and from researcher-initiated grants to funder-defined contracts as universities become more engaged in community-based research and application (Petersen and Dukes 2004).

Early in the twentieth century, Ward (1906:9) separated applied sociology from civic and social reform. The relationship between applied sociology, on the one hand, and deliberate interventions based in sociological reasoning by social engineers and clinical sociologists, on the other, has been a source of contention ever since. This chapter will focus on the history and development of applied sociology as a research endeavor undertaken on behalf of clients or funding agencies in contrast to the more direct interventionist approach of clinical sociology.

This chapter divides the past 150 years into four periods: (1) from the origins of sociology through the end of World War I—1850 to 1920; (2) the struggle between academic sociology and applied sociology—1920 to 1940; (3) the growth of federally sponsored research from World War II through the end of the War on Poverty—1940 to 1980; and (4) the emergence of a more independent and professional applied sociology since 1980.

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### ORIGINS OF APPLIED SOCIOLOGY: 1850 TO 1920

Auguste Comte (1798–1857), who created sociology, divided it into social statics, the study of the conditions and

preconditions of social order, and social dynamics, the study of human progress and evolution. Comte ([1854, 1896] 1961) wrote that the static view of society is the basis of sociology but that the dynamical view is not only the more interesting of the two but more philosophical, since social dynamics would study the laws of the rise and fall of societies and furnish the true theory of progress for political practice. Comte (Barnes 1948a:101) envisioned a corps of positivist priests trained as sociologists, who would not possess any temporal power but rather would influence through teaching and provide informed direction to public opinion. They would impart useful scientific knowledge and social advice on all aspects of civil life. They would suggest action to the civil authorities but would never undertake such action on their own responsibility or initiative. It appears that Comte's applied sociologists would be neither basic researchers nor social activists/interventionists but rather occupy a translational role between the two.

In contrast, Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) argued against any form of artificial interference and that sociologists should convince the public that society must be free from the meddling of governments and reformers (Coser 1977:97–102). He was very skeptical of the possibility of generating progress through legislation since such legislation is not based on the widest possible knowledge of the sociological principles involved (Barnes 1948b:134). Spencer was a strong advocate of laissez-faire and coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” several years before Darwin wrote *Origin of the Species*. As a result, he is considered the founder of Social Darwinism. Spencer thought societies evolved from coercive militarism to peaceful industrialism in which individuals are free to move about and change their social relations without destroying social cohesion. The change from militarism to industrialism is an evolutionary process that depends on the rate of integration, and the slower the rate, the more complete and satisfactory the evolution (Giddings 1909, cited in Tilman 2001). Therefore, evolution is a wholly spontaneous process that artificial human interference could in no way hasten but might fatally obstruct or divert (Barnes 1948b:129).

Within academic circles, one of Spencer's early supporters was William Graham Sumner (1840–1910). Sumner introduced the first serious course in sociology in the United States at Yale University in 1875, adopting Spencer's *The Study of Sociology* as the text. Sumner promoted a sociology marked by conservative politics, descriptive accounts of societal evolution, and the nature of normative systems that define and control behavior (Perdue 1986). In “The Absurd Effort to Make the World Over,” Sumner ([1894] 1911) strongly supported the idea that social evolution was almost entirely an automatic, spontaneous process that cannot be extensively altered by social effort (Barnes 1948c:160). He favored laissez-faire policies and saw state activity as “ignorant social doctors” telling the Forgotten Man, that is, the hard working middle

class, what to do to help those who had failed in the struggle for existence (Barnes 1948c:164).

Spencer was popularized in the United States through the efforts of Professor Edward Livingston Youmans, a chemist, educator, writer, and eventually an important agent and editor for D. Appleton and Company (Versen 2006). In 1860, after reading the prospectus for *Principles of Psychology*, Youmans arranged for the first American publication of Spencer's works, and in 1872, became the founding editor of *The Popular Science Monthly*, which promoted science generally and evolution in particular. For Youmans (1872), science was not limited to natural and biological phenomena but included the intelligent observation of the characters of people, the scrutiny of evidence in regard to political theories, the tracing of cause and effect in the sequences of human conduct, and the strict inductive inquiry as to how society has come to be what it is.

Spencer's ideas on evolution, antimilitarism, and peaceful industrialism became the focus of some adult education courses in the Second Unitarian Church in Brooklyn, New York. Youmans was acquainted with its minister, John White Chadwick. This group eventually formed the Brooklyn Ethical Association, and one of its objectives was “the scientific study of ethics, politics, economics, sociology, religion and philosophy, and also of physics and biology as related thereto” (Brooklyn Ethical Association, Certificate of Incorporation, cited in Versen 2004:9; Skilton 2005:4). The Association devoted its 1881–82 sessions to Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*. Within 10 years, the Association created a class of Honorary Corresponding Members, which included Herbert Spencer himself; Thomas H. Huxley ([1893] 2004), President of the British Royal Society, who argued that humans created an ethical process that deviated from, and worked counter to, the natural course of evolution; Minot J. Savage (1886), Unitarian minister in Chicago and Boston and author of *Social Problems*; Andrew Dickson White, historian and first president of Cornell University; Eliza A. Youmans, a pioneer in the field of botany and sister of Edward Youmans; and Joseph Le Conte, geologist, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1891, and author of “Race Problems in the South” (1892), published in the Association's *Man and the State*.

In 1892, the Brooklyn Ethical Association published *Man and the State: Studies in Applied Sociology* and in 1893, *Factors in American Civilization: Studies in Applied Sociology*. This may be the first use of the term *applied sociology* in the title of a book. The association considered sociology to be the science of social evolution and sought to apply “evolutionary philosophy and ethics to the study and discussion of the pressing problems of politics and statesmanship to come before the people of the United States” (Skilton 2005:4).

The preface to *Man and State* (Brooklyn 1892:v–vi) reaffirmed Spencer's views that societies grew in a regular and orderly way according to inherent laws that were not mechanically imposed. It noted that while a priori schemes

of social reformers can stimulate thought, promote altruistic endeavor, and educate the individual, enacting these schemes into legislation would not abolish poverty or crime, or speed the renovation of society. The preface saw the role of sociology as a safer and wiser way of individual enlightenment and moral education. Sociology would subject the schemes of social reformers to the operations of the principle of natural selection, identify what is instructive and good in each, propose practical forward steps, and substitute the method of evolution for that of violent and spasmodic change, thereby, slowly promoting the permanent welfare of societies and individuals.

Lester F. Ward (1841–1913), who brought the term applied sociology into the discipline, spent most of his career as a paleontologist with the United States Geological Survey, joining the Sociology Department of Brown University in 1906 when he was 65. His early work focused on the relation of fossil plants to geological location in strata and this undoubtedly reflected an interest in evolution. In 1876, he published “The Local Distribution of Plants and the Theory of Adaptation” in *Popular Science Monthly*, which brought him to the attention of its editor, Edward Youmans. In addition, Ward’s mentor, the noted geologist and explorer John Wesley Powell, wrote to Youmans in support of *Dynamic Sociology or Applied Social Science*, which was published in 1883 (Ward 1883:iii–v; Scott 1976:29).

*Dynamic Sociology* was the first major American work on sociology and although not intended as a text, was on the reading lists of early sociology courses. Ward differed sharply from Spencer and Sumner on laissez-faire individualism, and he argued for the efficacy of government as an agent of social reform, if it could be put on a scientific basis and purged of its corruption and stupidity (Barnes 1948d:182). As a career government scientist with a legal background, Ward understandably took up Comte’s idea of sociocrats, believing that government can directly improve the conditions of society in a conscious or “telic” manner if the legislators will only become social scientists or have gained knowledge of the nature and means of controlling the social forces and be willing to apply this knowledge (Barnes 1948d:183 citing *Dynamics*). Scientific lawmaking would be based on a greater use of social statistics (Ward 1877), with sociology as the chief source of information that is essential for any extensive development of scientific government (Barnes 1948d:185).

On the other hand, Ward (1906:10) was very skeptical about the efforts of utopian social reform and socialist movements that favored radical and abrupt changes in social structures. He was a “meliorist” who thought that much could be accomplished through education of both the public and government leaders. Ward (1906) wrote,

Applied sociology is not government or politics, nor civic or social reform. It does not itself apply sociological principles; it only seeks to show how they might be. The most that it claims to do is to lay down certain general principles as guides to social and political action. (Pp. 9–10)

He added, “A sociologist, who takes sides on current events and the burning questions of the hour, abandons his science and becomes a politician.” Ward came to this mainly as a reaction to Spencer’s writing, which Ward thought was prejudiced, not scientific, and not in harmony with Spencer’s system as a whole and well before Max Weber ([1913] 1978) called for value-free sociology.

Youmans was disappointed with the initial sales of *Dynamic Sociology or Applied Social Science* and suspected that the title, which was drawn directly from Comte’s classification, was too close to Spencer’s *Descriptive Sociology*, which in turn derived from Comte’s social statics (Ward 1897:v). Ward, who would become the first president of the American Sociological Society (later renamed American Sociological Association, or ASA), was a participant in many intellectual and scientific societies (Odum 1951), including the Philosophical Society and Cosmos Club in Washington, D.C. (Scott 1976) and the Metaphysical Club (Menand 2001:301). He may have come across the term applied sociology as a result of attending a meeting of the Ethical Association, at which Dr. Felix Adler, professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature at Cornell University and founder of the ethical culture movement, among others, dealt with different methods of relieving human suffering and promoting human welfare. Ward (1906:28) wrote that this congress (possibly of all the ethical societies in America that was held in St. Louis in 1896) talked applied sociology from first to last. He was familiar with the new ethics that inquired into social conditions and sought to introduce modifications that would prevent existing evils and render their recurrence impossible (Ward 1906:29).

This may have included the Brooklyn Ethical Association’s two volumes of *Studies in Applied Sociology*. By the early 1890s, Ward (1903:vii, viii, 6) also knew that several European sociologists were using the term *pure sociology*. He may have first used the terms pure and applied sociology in the titles of two summer school courses at the University of Chicago in 1897, which he repeated at the University of West Virginia in 1898 and then at Stanford University in 1899. He published *Pure Sociology* in 1903 and *Applied Sociology* in 1906.

Ward himself did not do any sociological fieldwork or empirical research. Reformers at Hull House in Chicago did the earliest applied research in the United States. Despite his dislike for social reformers, Ward would probably have been pleased that it was done primarily by a group of women since he was a strong advocate of gender equality (Odum 1951). Like Ward, Jane Addams was critical of socialism and abstract theories that impeded social learning by their inflexibility and tendency to divide people. She also thought that science could guide social reform through the patient accumulation of facts about the lives of the working poor.

The key activist researcher was Florence Kelley (1859–1932), the daughter of a U.S. congressman, who studied at Cornell University and the University of Zurich

and, in 1887, translated Engel's *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. She came to Chicago in 1891 with her three children and became a resident of Hull House. Kelley, Addams, and the other Hull House activists were convinced that once the overwhelming suffering of the poor was documented and publicized, meaningful reforms would be quickly put into place (Brown 2001).

In 1892, the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics hired Kelley to investigate the "sweating" system in the Chicago garment industry. Then, in 1893, when the U.S. Congress commissioned a nationwide survey to investigate the slums of great cities and assess the extent of poverty in urban areas, she was selected to lead the survey effort in Chicago. Kelley and others conducted a door-to-door survey in the Hull House district and, following the lead of Charles Booth's maps of poverty in London, created maps showing the nationality, wages, and employment history of each resident. Published in 1895, *The Hull-House Maps and Papers* offered no explanation for the causes of poverty and social disorder.

For Addams, practice was a priority over theory (Schram 2002). In the preface, she claimed that this was not a sociological investigation to test or build theory but a constructive work that could help push the progressive agenda to address the injustices of poverty. As such, it simply recorded certain phases of neighborhood life and presented detailed information that might prompt a humanitarian response from the government (Brown 2001). Kelley authored two chapters, one on the sweating system and another with Alzina P. Stevens on wage-earning children. Interestingly, the authors of two other chapters, Charles Zeublin, "The Chicago Ghetto" and Josefa Humpal Zeman, "The Bohemian People in Chicago," were forerunners of the Chicago School of Sociology of the 1920s. Zeublin joined the faculty of the University of Chicago Sociology Department a few years later.

Kelley earned a law degree from Northwestern University and in 1899 moved to New York City to head the National Consumer's League (NCL) where she worked with Josephine Goldmark, director of research at NCL, to prepare the successful "Brandeis brief" defense of 10-hour workday legislation for women in *Muller v. Oregon* (1908), which like the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) school desegregation case almost 50 years later, used sociological evidence to support its case (Sklar 1985; Deegan 1986).

Jane Addams (1860–1935) followed her own applied and activist track in Chicago. Throughout her career, she maintained a tenuous relationship with academic sociology. In 1892, she taught a summer course on applied philanthropy and ethics with sociologist Franklin Giddings, and, in 1893, presided over a two-day conference at the Chicago World's Fair sponsored by the International Parliament of Sociology. She declined at least two offers to join the Sociology Department at Chicago, apparently over concerns about the limits on speech and political activism

associated with university settings. Addams, however, did become a charter member of the American Sociological Society, was an invited speaker at several meetings, and published in the *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS) as well as other scholarly and popular journals. Two of her books (Addams [1902] 1964, [1916] 2002) received favorable reviews in the AJS (Deegan 1986).

But by 1920, a combination of backlash against social activism, the development of social theory to explain the causes as well as the effects of social problems, and gender discrimination marginalized Addams and other women sociologists from regular academic departments into what would become schools of social work (Deegan 1986).

If Addams and other social workers charted an independent course, Seba Eldridge (1885–1953) worked in social services before discovering sociology. Initially trained as a civil engineer, he came to New York City around 1907. He held a part-time position with the Bureau of Advice and Information of the New York Charity Organization Society investigating and appraising civic and social agencies appealing for aid. He occasionally resided at various East Side settlement houses, becoming familiar with the conditions of the people in the neighborhoods (Ream 1923; Clark 1953; McCluggage 1955). Eldridge knew of the work of Felix Adler and the Ethical Culture movement. In 1911, he began graduate study at Columbia University in social philosophy and finished his dissertation under John Dewey in 1925. But he also studied with both Franklin Giddings and William F. Ogburn and learned of their interests in scientific sociology, quantitative methods, and objectivity. From 1913 to 1915, he served as secretary of the Department of Social Betterment of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities.

Eldridge (1915) wrote *Problems of Community Life; an Outline of Applied Sociology* in which he classified New York's social problems according to the attention given them by reformers and the general public along with the general plans that various philanthropies, social reform groups, and municipal agencies put forward for the better organization of reform activities in the city. His suggestions for reform were few and emerged from the logic of the situations under analysis rather than from partisan interests (he was politically active on the side of anti-Tammany forces). In 1921, Eldridge joined the sociology faculty at the University of Kansas where he remained for the rest of his life. Much of his subsequent work focused on methods of improving the quality of citizenship, and he was well ahead of his time in advocating that social science departments should give students actual practice in the skills of citizenship through participation in community activities.

Not only was sociology being applied in social welfare and social policy, but it also gained an early toehold in industry. In January 1914, Henry Ford created a "profit sharing" plan that would pay workers up to \$5 a day, when the average wage for an unskilled automobile worker was \$2.40. The "profit sharing" was not a Taylorist scientific

management bonus for additional quality work and was not directly tied to Ford Motor Company profits. Rather, it depended on workers maintaining good habits and taking care of their families and dependants. This was a radical concept and challenged the general belief that a sharp increase in the wages would have a bad effect because the workers would spend the additional money on drinking and gambling. Ford, however, wanted every worker to have a comfortable home and be able to own a Ford automobile. To select workers for the program and monitor their behavior as well as test this “theory,” he created a “Sociology Department” within Ford Motor Company (Loizides and Sonnad 2004).

The Department was headed by John R. Lee who was asked to identify which workers were qualified to participate in the “profit sharing” and then help the others to become qualified. This meant gathering information from the workers, and occasionally friends or neighbors, on their background, family situation, financial state, and personal habits through informal, semistructured interviews. Recorded data included basic demographics; financial information, including life insurance and bank name, location and balance; and health information, including family doctor and habits such as smoking or drinking. In early 1914, investigators and interpreters, selected from among existing Ford employees, were highly visible as they drove Ford automobiles to the homes of the workers who were to be interviewed. The result was that 60 percent of the workers qualified for the “profit sharing” (Loizides and Sonnad 2004).

However, the investigators were aggressive and some questions were intrusive. In addition, many non-English speaking workers did not qualify, possibly because of translation difficulties, and they and their families were angry. (The cause of these negative reactions would be recalled in the mid-1930s when Ford adamantly opposed unionization.) Lee then conducted a second phase, in the spring of 1914, to verify the initial findings and use better-prepared translators. He told the investigators not to go into a home in a way that they would not want someone to come into theirs and cautioned them about delving into strictly personal matters. At the end of this phase, 69 percent of the workers were eligible. The company then began to Americanize its immigrant work force. In May 1914, it opened the Ford Language School, which taught English to workers after the first shift. Classes also stressed American ways and customs, encouraged thriftiness, and good personal and work habits. By the end of 1914, 87 percent of the workers qualified for the “profit sharing” (Loizides and Sonnad 2004).

In 1916, Lee left Ford to develop the field of personnel management. Lee (1916) wrote a paper on the Ford profit-sharing system for the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. About 10 years later, Shenton (1927:198) noted in his *Practical Application of Sociology* that “certain businessmen have already made beginnings in sociological research and a number are

conducting experiments under the observation of trained sociologists.”

## ACADEMIC VERSUS APPLIED SOCIOLOGY: 1920 TO 1940

In 1916, sociology students at the University of Southern California started a journal, *Studies in Sociology*, but in October 1921, they changed its name to *Journal of Applied Sociology*. Alice Fesler (1921) explained that the name was taken from Ward’s threefold classification of pure sociology, applied sociology, and social reform. The journal carried short pieces by students and well-known sociologists. A 1924 issue included “The Major Ills of the Social Survey” by Seba Eldridge, “A Race Relations Survey” by Robert E. Park, and “Social Psychology of Fads” by Emory Bogardus. But in 1927, the *JAS* was combined with the *Bulletin of Social Research* to become *Sociology and Social Research*. An editorial note explained that since productive research was the very basis of applied sociology, the journal would now publish significant pieces of research, although descriptions and analyses of social problems and the process, whereby they are reduced and solved, would still be printed. The journal would combine research and practice (Lucas 1927).

World War I marked the beginning of the end for the Progressive Era of social reforms to improve the lives of workers and immigrants, to conserve natural resources, and to make government more effective and less corrupt. In the social sciences, the acceptance of statistical thinking and quantification spurred the emergence of scientific methods, which in turn supported a growing dominance of the academic discipline over practical sociology and social activism. Social work was considered to be a technique and an art, not a science (Shenton 1927). In contrast, applied sociology was a science that could contribute to the development of an objective description of social problems and an understanding of their causes (Bossard 1932) and could be used to guide social planning and social engineering (Odum 1934). Applied sociology would attempt to keep on an even keel of objective, value-free, social research amidst cross-currents of political ideology and social activism.

In 1916, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, a former Princeton professor of political science, supported a request by the National Academy of Sciences to create a National Research Council (NRC) to organize research and secure the cooperation of military and civilian agencies as a measure of national preparedness (Cochrane 1978). In 1918, after the United States entered the war, Wilson (1918) issued an executive order under which the NRC was

to stimulate research in the mathematical, physical and biological sciences, and in the application of these sciences to engineering, agriculture, medicine and other useful arts, with

the object of increasing knowledge, of strengthening the national defense, and of contributing in other ways to the public welfare.

(Social sciences would not be explicitly added until George H. Bush did so in a January 1993 executive order.)

In 1921, Congress passed the national origins immigration Quota Act that discouraged immigration from eastern and southern Europe. The next year, the NRC asked for social science representation on a study of human migration (Rhoades 1981). The sociologist member of the Committee on the Scientific Problems of Human Migration was Mary Abby van Kleeck, the director of the Russell Sage Foundation's Department of Industrial Studies. Van Kleeck was a pioneer in industrial sociology, having conducted studies of unorganized workers and sweatshop labor. Other sociologists who attended a sponsored conference on migration, included Edith Abbott, Henry Fairchild, William Ogburn, and Robert Park (Wissler 1929).

On taking office in 1929, President Herbert Hoover established the President's Research Committee on Social Trends in the hope that social issues and problems could be scrutinized in the rational manner that had characterized his earlier efforts that reduced domestic consumption of food by 15 percent without rationing during World War I and his organization of flood relief work and health improvement in 1927 (Odum 1933; Volti 2004; Hoover Archives 2005). The Rockefeller Foundation funded it for three years at \$560,000, and William F. Ogburn (1886–1950), who coined the phrase “cultural lag,” was named study director (Rhoades 1981). He would also serve as director of the Consumers Advisory Board of the National Recovery Administration (NRA).

In his 1929 ASS Presidential address, Ogburn (1930) declared that “sociology as a science is not interested in making the world a better place in which to live.” On the surface this appears to be a rejection of Ward's amelioration and a revival of Sumner's laissez-faire position. But Ogburn's main purpose was to ensure that scientific methods would be the basis for applied research and to distance it from ethics, religion, journalism, and propaganda. Like Ward, he did not believe that the sociologist as scientist should hold office or lead movements. Ogburn encouraged sociologists to be wherever data on significant social problems were to be found: on the staff of the courts, in factories, at political party headquarters, and in community centers. He wanted the sociologist to be there to discover new knowledge and relationships rather than as an executive, leader, or social worker who puts to use the information which the scientific sociologist furnishes. He even predicted that a great deal of research would be done outside of universities by government, trade unions, employers' associations, civic bodies, political parties, and social service organizations. Ogburn recognized that this research would be done for a specific purpose to prove a particular hypothesis or to gain a desired end. He asserted

that to do this, the researchers should be free to follow the evidence and that they therefore must be sharply distinguished from the executives or policymakers.

This was already happening. The most well-known private sector applied research began in April 1927 at the Western Electric Plant in Hawthorne, Illinois. It would culminate with the publication of *Management and the Worker* (Roethlisberger and Dixon 1939), which described worker behaviors and interactions in the experimental Relay Assembly Test Room and the Bank Wiring Observation Room. A few years later in 1933, J. L. Moreno, in collaboration with Helen Hall Jennings, began consulting at the New York State Training School for Girls in Hudson, New York, where he developed his sociometric system and began the *Sociometric Review*, which was renamed *Sociometry*.

Ogburn also drew an interesting distinction between sociologists who are research scientists and social engineers who, like physicians, are not scientists but who apply reliable scientific procedures and relatively exact knowledge. The concept of social engineering was developed by William Tolman ([1909] 2005), who thought that industrialists should assume more social responsibility for their workers and should hire social engineers to be the primary intermediary between the industrialist and the employees. Andrew Carnegie liked the idea and wrote an introduction to the book. Tolman also advocated that employers become involved with the workers and their families through programs for social insurance, profit sharing, and savings (Östlund 2003). These ideas may have led Henry Ford to set up the “Sociology Department” to support his “profit sharing” plan and John Lee to leave Ford and start personnel management.

But the term *social engineering* was about to take on an ominous and decidedly negative connotation. In 1928, Stalin introduced the first Soviet five-year plan, and the Third Reich would soon adopt social engineering and use applied urban and rural sociology in their plans for the reorganization of an expanded Germany and the expulsion and annihilation of the populations of conquered territories (Klingemann 1992). These developments were noted by several American sociologists, including Robert K. Merton (1936), who advocated that scientists repudiate the application of utilitarian norms and quipped that “an economy of social engineers is no more conceivable or practicable than an economy of laundrymen” (p. 900).

In 1934, *Social Forces* asked 23 prominent sociologists to contribute to a Round Table Symposium to address questions such as “What is the role of sociology in current social reconstruction?” Arthur E. Wood (1934) recounted that Charles Cooley said that in his early days he had the greatest difficulty in trying to tell his colleagues the difference between sociology and socialism. Borrowing terms from William James, Wood then identified three types of sociologists: (1) the tough minded who are all for objectivity but sit on the sidelines when it comes to the hard contests over practical issues; (2) the tender minded or welfare



sociologists who come from a background of religion or social work and tinker around the edges without much knowledge or insight into the nature of the structure which they would change; and (3) the radicals, that is, those active in partisan or revolutionary movements, who have an analysis of the social order and a blue print of what should be done but whose strength lies in their dogmatism which does not qualify them as social scientists. Without using the term applied sociology, Wood concluded that sociology could use descriptive analysis of social structures and processes involving critical evaluations to guide the tendencies of social change in the interest of reform.

The issue of the relationship between academic sociology and applied sociology in its various forms was part of a five-year struggle within the American Sociological Society over what Marklund (2005) calls the scientific detachment versus political involvement dilemma or as Stuart A. Queen (1934), who worked for the American Red Cross and the Detroit Community Fund as well as teaching sociology at Kansas and Washington University, put it, "How to steer between the Scylla of academic isolation and the Charybdis of partisan activity" (pp. 207–208).

At the 1931 annual meeting of the American Sociological Society, Maurice Parmelee, an early behaviorist and criminologist, Robert MacIver, and Pitirim Sorokin among others, distributed a memorandum in which they claimed that the programs and publications of the Society were devoted in considerable part to practical rather than to scientific problems, that as a result the public has the impression that the Society is a religious, moral, and social reform organization rather than a scientific society, and that the Society has become in large part a society of applied sociology. To remedy this, they proposed that voting members have a higher university degree in sociology and be engaged in sociological research, writing, and teaching and that the Society assume control of the official journal, at the time the *American Journal of Sociology* controlled by the Chicago Sociology Department (Rhoades 1981). Martindale (1976) interpreted this as a conflict between the more populist and progressive midwestern departments that were receptive to Ward's Comtean view of science as social reconstruction and the more academically conservative eastern departments linked to Sumner and Social Darwinism.

In 1934, the Society's Committee on Scope of Research reported that New Deal and other social welfare agencies were using sociological research for the solution of practical problems. It recommended a closer integration of sociologists with the sociological work of government, a more complete and discriminating canvass of research in progress and an emphasis on the region as the unit of research because of developments in social planning. Two years later, in 1936, the Committee on Opportunities for Trained Sociologists recommended the creation of a new permanent committee for the promotion of the professional (as opposed to the disciplinary) interests of sociologists. The new committee would get sociological training and field experience recognized as a qualification or

substitute qualification for certain Federal and state civil service positions, expand graduate training in sociology to meet the need for equipping students for technical positions, and involve sociology in state planning commissions and the reorganization of state welfare systems, as well as publicize sociology (Rhoades 1981). The Society, however, did not take up these recommendations. Applied sociology was set adrift in stormy seas as the academics opted for a narrower disciplinary and scientific learned society and the reformers moved into administrative positions in New Deal agencies.

## FEDERAL FUNDING FOR APPLIED SOCIOLOGY: 1940 TO 1980

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Applied sociology received a substantial boost from World War II and then the War on Poverty. In both cases, research and observations collected in natural settings for applied purposes would generate new knowledge and contribute to sociological theories and concepts, as had been called for by Ogburn (1930) in his Society presidential address. Fifty years later, Peter Rossi (1980) in his ASA presidential address noted that many pieces of client-initiated applied work would, over time, be presented in the sociological literature as primarily basic research.

In November 1941, the War Department established a Research Branch in the Information and Education Division to provide the army command quickly and accurately with facts about the attitudes of soldiers. Samuel Stouffer (1900–1960) became the director of the Troop Attitude Program and with the assistance of more than 100 sociologists, seven of whom would serve as presidents of the ASA, conducted more than 200 surveys during the war years with more than half a million soldiers. Topics covered included practices associated with trench foot, what articles were read in *Yank Magazine*, determining attitudes toward promotion and job assignments in the military, the attitudes of Negro soldiers, and the point system for personnel demobilization after the war (Bowers 1967).

In December 1942, a compendium of troop-attitude studies was published for limited army staff distribution, but each succeeding issue was more widely distributed, eventually down to the company level. Stouffer saw the research branch as doing an engineering job, not a scientific one. The reports not only emphasized that problems could be treated at the local command level but also that they were of value in planning and policy activities, for example, estimates of the number of veterans who would go to college if federal aid were provided led to the GI Bill and accurately predicted the actual postwar experience. Nevertheless Stouffer noted that the channels of communication between the policymakers and the actual study directors in the Branch were often very unsatisfactory and the potential effectiveness in policy making of some of the research was lost (Bowers 1967).

Stouffer's applied research efforts, however, would make an impact on sociological theory and methods, initially in

the four volumes of *The American Soldier*, and then in extensive secondary analyses published in *Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope and Methods of "The American Soldier"* (Merton and Lazarsfeld 1950). Chapters by Hans Speier, Edward Shils, Robert Merton, and Alice Kitt (Rossi) supported and developed theories and understandings of primary groups, reference groups, and military organization. Also working for the Research Branch was Louis Guttman who made significant contributions to attitude research, particularly the technique, which bears his name, for demonstrating the unidimensionality of scales based on a small number of items. Further study of its properties by Lazarsfeld led to latent content analysis. Finally, a number of sociologists, including John Useem, George C. Homans, Ralph Turner, Morris Janowitz, and Edward Shils used their military experiences in their sociological writings (Bowers 1967).

Applied research was also conducted on the home front. In the fall of 1941, an Office of Facts and Figures was created in the Office of War Information (OWI) to collect survey data on public attitudes and behavior concerning a broad range of war-related problems, including civilian morale and the effects of wartime regulations. The OWI needed a contractor and asked George Gallup who recommended Harry H. Field who had worked for him when they were both in the market research department of the advertising firm of Young and Rubicam (Marklund 2005). Through Gallup, Field was introduced to Hadley Cantril, Paul Lazarsfeld, and Samuel Stouffer who helped him establish the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Denver in the fall of 1941 (NORC would move to the University of Chicago in 1947). NORC got the contract for the civilian surveys and established a New York office in the building used by OWI. Early in 1942, Paul B. Sheatsley, who was working for Gallup at the time, headed the survey research efforts. Many of the OWI surveys were simply fact-finding endeavors (how people disposed of their waste fats or how they were using their ration coupons), but others were pioneering efforts such as the first national measurement of racial attitudes (NORC 2005).

The OWI employed Paul Lazarsfeld (1901–1976) among others. Lazarsfeld had come to the United States as a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation and served as director of the Foundation's Office of Radio Research, which moved to Columbia University in 1939 and became the Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR) in 1944 (now the Lazarsfeld Center for the Social Sciences in the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy). Over the years, Lazarsfeld and his students would conduct applied research for clients that would later contribute to modern market research, mathematical sociology, and mass communications research (BASR 2005). His work on personal influence (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955) stemmed from applied work financed by a magazine publisher to convince would be advertisers that placing ads in the magazine would reach opinion leaders, and a BASR study for a pharmaceutical company on the adoption of a new

drug revealed the roles played by professional and social ties among physicians (Coleman, Katz, and Menzel 1966). In 1983, three of Lazarsfeld's former students would be the directors of social research for the three major networks: CBS, ABC, and NBC (Sills 1987).

Just before the war, the U.S. Department of Agriculture appointed Rensis Likert (1903–1981) director of the Division of Program Surveys in Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Likert had already developed his five-point scale and taught at New York University before becoming director of research for the Life Insurance Agency in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1935, where he conducted studies on the effectiveness of different styles of supervision. During the war, Likert and his colleagues conducted surveys of farmer's experiences and opinions. At the end of the war, Likert contacted Theodore M. Newcomb, who had worked with him during the war. Together they formed the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Michigan to conduct publishable studies for businesses, foundations, governmental and other agencies on all kinds of economic, social, and business problems.

To complement the survey focus, Likert suggested that the Research Center for Group Dynamics (RCGD), then at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, join SRC to form the Institute for Social Research (ISR) in 1948. The RCGD was founded by Kurt Lewin (1890–1947) and then headed by Dorwin Cartwright who had worked with Likert in the Division of Program Surveys. Likert had served on the Committee on Food Habits of the National Research Council, which funded Lewin's experiments demonstrating that food shoppers were more likely to change their buying habits as a result of a discussion followed by a public commitment than after a lecture by an expert. This led to his field theory involving food channels and the concept of gatekeepers (Wansink 2002). Lewin used the term *action research* and intended his research to result in guiding the actions needed to solve social problems, reducing the gap between social science knowledge and the use of that knowledge.

Early SRC research included an objective evaluation of a program to encourage acceptance of minority groups within the United Autoworkers Union and a study of morale at a telephone company that led to improved productivity and job satisfaction. RCGD and the Tavistock Institute in London jointly published the journal *Human Relations*. In *New Patterns of Management*, Likert (1961) summarized the principles and practices used by highest producing managers and proposed a more effective system of management.

By 1960, these and other university-based social research centers were producing empirical findings that had a considerable impact on sociological theories, methods, and concepts. In 1961, the Society for the Study of Social Problems, under the leadership of Alvin Gouldner, focused its meeting on the topic of applied social science and major papers were published in *Applied Sociology: Opportunities and Problems* (Gouldner and Miller 1965).

The papers explored practitioner-client relations and case studies in a variety of areas, including law, family, community, race relations, and delinquency. Years later, coeditor S. M. Miller (2001) revealed that he regretted the use of the term applied sociology because it was highly ambiguous—did it refer to sociologists employed outside academia, to academic sociologists who did studies for nonprofit and voluntary organizations whether paid for or not, to social activists or to public policy critics and intellectuals?—and because he saw little linkage between applied work and sociological study.

When Paul Lazarsfeld was elected ASA president, he proposed that the theme for the 1962 meetings be “Sociology in Action” or “Applied Sociology” to highlight the contribution of applied and case studies to theoretical and methodological advances. The ASA Executive Council, however, changed it to “Uses of Sociology,” which also became the title of an edited volume of 31 invited papers. The term *uses* went beyond applied sociology to encompass where and to what extent sociological findings and perspectives were used by professionals, businesses, voluntary agencies, the military, schools, and public bodies. Authors were asked to address the difficulties of translating practical issues into research problems and to discuss the intellectual gaps between research findings and advice for action (Lazarsfeld, Sewell, and Wilensky 1967:x). According to Gollin (1983:444), most authors had problems doing the latter—that is, identifying concrete applications of sociological ideas or findings.

In a provocative essay, Robert C. Angell (1967:737) raised some ethical issues concerning applied research. He worried that since such research is used to further the practical ends of business, voluntary associations, or government, it would take only a slight distortion in the sampling procedure or in the phrasing of questions to obtain findings desired by the client. Because they do not have the high calling of developing abstract scientific knowledge, he argued that the applied researcher cannot claim the special privileges that are sometimes enjoyed by those who do. For example, while it may be sometimes ethical to deceive subjects for the purpose of obtaining important new scientific knowledge, provided they are later debriefed, this justification cannot, in Angell’s opinion, be used for applied research because the ends are not scientific ones.

These edited volumes on applied sociology written from the perspective of disciplinary sociology, however, failed to take the wind out of the sails. In fact, in his ASA presidential address, Rossi (1980) noted that from 1960 to 1980 applied social research enjoyed a boom period in which sociology, as a discipline, had not really shared. Essentially the War on Poverty generated large-scale applied research involving needs assessments for program planning, demonstration and pilot services, and program evaluations, which were risky, controversial, and could not easily be translated into academic publications. Dentler (2002) estimated that, from 1960 to 1975, approximately 100 social science research and development firms were

established, a third of which were located in the Washington, D.C., suburbs. Finally several specialized applied social research centers were created, such as the Disaster Research Center at the Ohio State University in 1963, now at the University of Delaware.

In 1964, the U.S. Office of Education commissioned James S. Coleman to determine how educational opportunity, defined as condition of school buildings, trained teachers, and curricula, were distributed by race and ethnicity. The Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (Coleman et al. 1966), which studied all 3rd-, 6th-, 9th-, and 12th-grade students in 4,000 schools, not only documented the pervasiveness of segregation in the schools but went beyond the rather narrow Congressional mandate to explore how parental education and social status as well as peer pressures effected student achievement (Rossi 1980; Rossi and Whyte 1983; Dentler 2002). If the findings were controversial, the subsequent implementation of mandated bussing and the flight of white families from city schools were even more so. Coleman (1976), who originally supported school integration, changed his mind in the 1970s when he concluded that the policies that focused wholly on within-district bussing actually increased rather than reduced school segregation.

The Coleman Report (Coleman et al. 1966) belies the argument that doing applied research for government agencies substantially limits intellectual and political independence and that applied researchers are at the beck and call of decision makers and policy implementers (Dentler 2002). Rossi (1980) pointed out that the applied researcher could negotiate and in some cases broaden the scope of the study to include sociological variables and factors. On the other hand, it also illustrates Rossi’s points that applied social research may be used in policy formation and become embroiled in rancorous controversy in which the work is attacked, misused, or misapplied, and that sociologists are ordinarily not directly involved in decision making, policy formation, or program implementation. Like Ward and Ogburn before him, Rossi warned that applied social research is not for would-be philosopher kings.

During this time, studies continued to bridge the gap between pure and applied research. For example, Benjamin Bloom’s (1964) work on stability of IQ during early childhood later provided Head Start with data on where best to intervene with compensatory preschool educational programs, William Sewell’s study (Sewell, Hauser, and Featherman 1976) on status attainment began as a state-sponsored survey of Wisconsin high school seniors, and Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977, 1983) published her own research on corporations for a broader audience.

## PROFESSIONALISM AND TRAINING IN APPLIED SOCIOLOGY: 1980 TO PRESENT

The late 1970s witnessed an increase in the production of M.A. and Ph.D. sociologists at a time when sociology

departments were not hiring (Koppel 1993). A large number of new sociologists took positions outside academia in professional schools and in research units in government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private consulting firms. Many wanted to present and publish their findings in sociological venues.

In the late 1960s, Alex Boros (1931–1996) established what is believed to be the first graduate program in applied sociology at Kent State University. In 1978, a dinner conversation about the lack of applied sessions at the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) meetings led to the formation of the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS; Steele and Iutovich 1997). In 1979, SAS held sessions in conjunction with the NCSA. SAS was formally incorporated in 1984 with Boros as the first president, and it began publishing the *Journal of Applied Sociology*. In 1994, SAS approved a code of ethics for Applied Sociologists. Over the years, the presidency of SAS has been fairly evenly divided between applied sociologists who worked in academic institutions and those who either owned their own consulting firms or were employed by governmental, nonprofit, or business entities.

The late 1970s also saw the creation of the Clinical Sociological Association (renamed Sociological Practice Association) and the ASA Section on Sociological Practice. Then, in 1980, Peter Rossi became ASA president followed the next year by William Foote Whyte, both of whom considered themselves applied sociologists. An ASA Committee on Professional Opportunities in Applied Sociology, chaired by Howard Freeman, held a workshop in December 1981 titled “Directions in Applied Sociology.” The papers presented were published in *Applied Sociology* (Freeman et al. 1983) and explored the then current status of applied sociology, the range of applied sociology roles in diverse settings, and the academic training of applied sociologists (Rosich 2005).

ASA also started a journal, the *Sociological Practice Review*, to provide a discipline sponsored publication for applied, clinical, and practicing sociologists, and to disseminate knowledge on how sociology can be applied to practical problems. Reviewed in 1992 during its third year, it was found to have had difficulty attracting sufficient manuscripts along with falling subscriptions. Despite opposition by the majority of editors of other ASA journals, the publications committee, by one vote, recommended that it be supported for another three years. The Executive Office and Budget Committee, however, recommended discontinuance and the ASA Council agreed (Dentler 1992; K. G. Edwards, personal communication from ASA Director of Publications, June 28, 2005).

In 1991, ASA was awarded funds to establish the Sydney S. Spivak Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy with the purpose of enhancing the visibility, prestige, and centrality of applied social research and the application of sociological knowledge to social policy. The Program supported a Congressional Fellowship and policy briefings by sociologists on topics such as HIV/AIDS,

youth violence, immigrants, and reactions to terrorism. It also offered Community Action Fellowships of up to \$2,500 to cover direct costs of sociologists working with community groups to conduct needs assessments, evaluation studies, and empirical research of community activities and planning, or to produce an analytical literature review to address the community group’s goals (Rosich 2005).

The introduction to the *Uses of Sociology* (Lazarsfeld et al. 1967:xxii) noted that a Ph.D. in sociology did not really train students for employment outside academia. It asked what type of professional training would be needed, what role university research bureaus, centers and institutes would play, and whether sociologists should create programs within departments or separate schools of social research. Freeman and Rossi (1984) proposed that some departments having appropriately trained and motivated faculty, add applied training as an option for their graduate and undergraduate students. Such a program would provide a solid general grounding in the history, current trends, theories, and range of research methods in sociology, with additional practical and pragmatic skills of how to administer sample surveys and field research, how to select and work with a survey research organization or train others to collect data, and how to write a response to a request for proposals as opposed to a journal article.

In her SAS Presidential address, Jeanne Ballantine (1991) reported on a study of where sociology majors were employed after graduation, what employers were seeking, and what undergraduate applied programs were providing. She found a variety of efforts ranging from one or two courses, to an internship or field experience, to a complete track or concentration. The demand for training generated a set of texts and supplements by Sullivan (1992), Steele, Scarisbrick-Hauser, and Hauser (1999), Du Bois and Wright (2001), Dentler (2002), Straus (2002), Steele and Price (2003), and Dukes, Petersen, and Van Valey (2004).

SAS president Stephen Steele conducted a needs assessment survey of SAS members in 1992 and found an interest in strengthening training programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. He appointed Harry Perlstadt to pursue this. In 1995, with the support of Joyce Iutovich, SAS President and David Kallen, president of the Sociological Practice Association (SPA), they formed the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology (Perlstadt 1995, 1998). The commission created standards for undergraduate and graduate programs (CACS 2005) and, by 2005, had accredited three undergraduate programs (St. Cloud State, Minnesota; Our Lady of the Lake, Texas; and Valdosta State, Georgia) and two masters level graduate programs (Humboldt State, California and Valdosta State, Georgia). Accreditation standards help programs provide quality training with adequate resources and the Commission itself serves as a clearinghouse for the programs.

In August 2000, SAS and SPA met together in Washington, D.C., with the theme Unity 2000. Both

recognized they were small and could benefit from combining their resources and efforts. As the result of hard work by, among others, Ross Koppel and Joan Biddle of SPA and Augie Diana and Jay Weinstein of SAS, the two groups merged in 2005 to become the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS), with a combined journal.

Since 1970, many Ph.D. sociologists have conducted applied research in a variety of settings. A 1995 National Science Foundation survey of Ph.D. sociologists found that less than half (45.8 percent) of all sociologists taught sociology at the postsecondary level and 27.1 percent of all Ph.D. sociologists were employed outside educational institutions (Dotzler and Koppel 1999). Unfortunately, only a few Ph.D. sociologists can be mentioned here. Michael Quinn Patton, one of the leading experts in evaluation research, wrote *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Patton 1997) and was president of the American Evaluation Association. Terence C. Halliday is a Senior Research Fellow at the American Bar Foundation and President of the National Institute for Social Science Information. He helped found and was chair of the ASA Sociology of Law section and served as editor of the interdisciplinary journal *Law and Social Inquiry*. Lola Jean Kozak, with the job title of health statistician/senior health researcher in the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers of Disease Control, has done applied research on avoidable hospitalizations that has affected the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Kozak, Hall, and Owings 2001). Sociologist William W. Darrow was the sole nonmedical scientist on the CDC Task Force in the early 1980s that did the initial investigations of what would be identified as the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Darrow et al. 1987; Lui, Darrow, and Rutherford 1988).

## APPLIED SOCIOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Over the years, applied sociology has bridged sociological theory and sociological practice, bringing theory and ideas to professional practitioners and decision makers while, in return, contributing to the knowledge base of sociology as a science and discipline. To some extent, the history of applied sociology has been embroiled in what Andrew Abbott (1988) would identify as clarifications and disputes over jurisdictions between the academic discipline and the practice of the profession. Applied sociology has tried to steer clear of entanglements with social philosophy and

ethics, on the one hand, and social engineering, reform, and activism on the other. But the very nature of applied sociology, and the interests of those who choose to do it, will mean that such jurisdictional tensions will continue well into the twenty-first century as they have for the past 150 years.

But the demand for applied sociology is not likely to slacken. The U.S. government has been commissioning social surveys and studies for over a century, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the NIH and NIMH road maps for research continue to look to and fund the applied side of the social and behavioral sciences. As Ogburn (1930) predicted, business, labor, community, and nonprofit service organizations all have a need for reliable and accurate data, needs assessments, and evaluations that applied sociology can provide. Evidence-based decision making and accountability will continue to be stressed as a rational necessity. Of course, decision makers and administrators will highlight those findings that meet their ends and ignore those that do not. In a few instances, applied findings will, unfortunately, be used for nefarious purposes as they were by the Soviets and Nazis.

Although the primary focus of ASA will remain on basic research and academic positions, applied sociology will continue to be recognized as a specialty/derivative field. The newly formed Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology may professionalize sociology by bringing more practitioners into contact with disciplinary sociology, thereby following a pattern that already exists in economics, psychology, and political science. This may be strengthened as more departments develop applied research and sociological practice training programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in response to societal demands. This would be accelerated if these departments consciously pursued their common educational interests through the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology.

Applied sociology is very resilient. The term has survived for more than a hundred years despite vague definitions and attempts to ignore or replace it. While sociology as a discipline and perspective may have increasing difficulties being appreciated in a culture of expanding individualism, personal liberty, and self-actualization, people, and especially social organizations and government agencies, will need to choose wisely on the basis of evidence. The heart of applied sociology is social research, and as long as decision makers want to know the social facts and people are trained to provide them, applied sociology will flourish.

## CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY

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Clinical sociology is as old as the field of sociology and its roots are found in many parts of the world (Fritz 1985, 1991b). The clinical sociology specialization, for instance, is often traced back to the fourteenth-century work of the Arab scholar and statesperson Abd-al-Rahman ibn Khaldun (1332–1406). Ibn Khaldun provided numerous clinical observations based on his varied work experiences such as secretary of state to the ruler of Morocco and chief judge of Egypt.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) and Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) are among those who are frequently mentioned in the history of the field. Comte, the French scholar who coined the term sociology, believed that the scientific study of societies would provide the basis for social action. Émile Durkheim's work on the relation between levels of influence (e.g., social compared with individual factors) led Alvin Gouldner (1965) to write that "more than any other classical sociologist [he] used a clinical model" (p. 19).

Albion Small, chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago and founding editor of *The American Journal of Sociology*, published "Scholarship and Social Agitation" in 1896. Small thought the primary reason for the existence of sociology was its "practical application to the improvement of social life" (Timasheff and Theodorson 1976:2). In Small's (1896) words,

Let us go about our business with the understanding that within the scope of scholarship there is first science, and second something better than science. That something better is first prevision by means of science, and second intelligent direction of endeavor to realize visions.

I would have American scholars, especially in the social sciences, declare their independence of do-nothing traditions. I would have them repeal the law of custom which bars marriage of thought with action. I would have them become more profoundly and sympathetically scholarly by enriching the wisdom which comes from knowing with the larger wisdom which comes from doing. (P. 564)

Clinical sociology, one of the fields that pairs science and action, is a humanistic, creative, and multidisciplinary field that seeks to improve the quality of people's lives. Clinical sociologists assess situations and reduce problems through analysis and intervention. Clinical analysis is the critical assessment of beliefs, policies, and/or practices with an interest in improving the situation. Intervention, the creation of new systems as well as the change of existing systems, is based on continuing analysis.

Clinical sociologists have different areas of expertise—such as health promotion, sustainable communities, social conflict, or cultural competence—and work in many capacities. They are, for example, community organizers, sociotherapists, mediators, focus group facilitators, social policy implementers, action researchers, and administrators.

Many clinical sociologists are full-time or part-time university professors, and these clinical sociologists may undertake intervention work in addition to their teaching and research or they may focus on providing some combination of research and advice to those who do take actions (e.g., policymakers, the public, administrators, corporate boards, unions). If the focus of clinical sociologists is on advice/analysis for the public sector, this emphasis, in the last few years, has been referred to as public sociology (Burawoy 2004; Fritz 2005b).

The role of the clinical sociologist can be at one or more levels of focus from the individual to the intersocietal. Even though the clinical sociologist specializes in one or two levels of intervention (e.g., marriage counseling, community consulting, national policy development), the practitioner will move among a number of levels (e.g., individual, organization, and community or micro/meso/macro) to analyze and/or intervene.

Sociological practice is a general term that includes two areas, clinical sociology and applied sociology. Clinical sociology, as practiced in the United States, emphasizes hands-on intervention while applied sociology emphasizes research for practical purposes. Both specialties require different kinds of specialized training. Some sociological practitioners only describe their work as “clinical” or “applied,” while others say they work in both areas.

Those clinical sociologists who conduct research may do so before beginning an intervention project to assess the existing state of affairs, during an intervention, and/or after the completion of the intervention to evaluate the outcome of that intervention. For some clinical sociologists, the research activity is an important part of their own clinical work. These sociologists have appropriate research training and look for opportunities to conduct research. Other clinical sociologists prefer to concentrate on the interventions and leave any research to other team members.

In the following sections, the development of the field of clinical sociology is discussed in terms of (1) the history of American sociology, (2) intervention, (3) theories and methods, and (4) international settings.

## THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY

American sociology emerged as a discipline in the 1890s at a time when the nation was struggling with issues of democracy, capitalism, and social justice. Frustration led to public protests and the development of reform organizations. In this scenario, it is not surprising that many of the early sociologists were scholar-practitioners interested in reducing or solving the pressing social problems that confronted their communities.

### Clinical Sociology as a Concept

While many of the early sociologists were interested in practice, the earliest known proposal using the words “clinical sociology” was put forward by Milton C. Winternitz, a physician who was dean of the Yale School of Medicine from 1920 through 1935. At least as early as 1929, Winternitz began developing a plan to establish a department of clinical sociology within Yale’s medical school. Winternitz wanted each medical student to have a chance to analyze cases based on a medical specialty as well as a specialty in clinical sociology.

Winternitz vigorously sought financial support for his proposal from the Rosenwald Fund, but was unable to obtain the necessary funds for a department of clinical sociology (Fritz 1989). He did note, however, the success of a course in the medical school’s section on public health that was based on the clinical sociology plan. Winternitz (1930) wrote about his effort to build a department in a report to the university president and the report was published in the Yale University *Bulletin*. Also published in 1930 was the speech Winternitz gave at the dedication of the University of Chicago’s new social science building in which he mentioned clinical sociology.

Abraham Flexner (1930), a prominent critic of medical education and director of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, mentioned clinical sociology in his *Universities: American, English, German*. Flexner did not approve of the Institute of Human Relations that Winternitz was establishing at Yale but did note that “Only one apparent novelty is proposed: a professor of clinical sociology” (p. 121).

Winternitz continued to write about the value of clinical sociology until 1936. One of his most forceful statements in support of the field appeared in his 1930–1931 annual report, which stated, in part, “Not only in medicine and in law, but probably in many other fields of activity, the broad preparation of the clinical sociologist is essential” (p. 51).

The first discussion of clinical sociology by a sociologist was Louis Wirth’s (1931a) article, “Clinical Sociology,” in *The American Journal of Sociology*. Wirth wrote at length about the possibility of sociologists working in child development clinics, though he did not specifically mention his own clinical work in New Orleans. Wirth wrote that “it may not be an exaggeration of the facts to speak of the genesis of a new division of sociology in the form of clinical sociology” (p. 49).

Wirth (1931b) also wrote a career development pamphlet, which stated,

The various activities that have grown up around child-guidance clinics, penal and correctional institutions, the courts, police systems, and similar facilities designed to deal with problems of misconduct have increasingly turned to sociologists to become members of their professional staffs.

Wirth “urged (sociology students) to become specialists in one of the major divisions of sociology, such as social psychology, urban sociology . . . or clinical sociology.”

In 1931, Saul Alinsky was a University of Chicago student who was enrolled in Burgess’s clinical sociology course. Alinsky’s (1934) article, “A Sociological Technique in Clinical Criminology,” appeared in the *Proceedings of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Congress of the American Prison Association*. Alinsky, best known now for his work in community organizing, was, in 1934, a staff sociologist and member of the classification board of the Illinois State Penitentiary.

In 1944, the first formal definition of clinical sociology appeared in H. P. Fairchild's *Dictionary of Sociology*. Alfred McClung Lee (1944), the author of that definition, later used the word *clinical* in the title of two of his articles—"Analysis of Propaganda: A Clinical Summary" (1945) and "The Clinical Study of Society" (1955) (Fritz 1991b:23). Lee was one of the founders of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, the Association for Humanist Sociology, and the Sociological Practice Association and also was, from 1976 to 1977, president of the American Sociological Association.

In "An Approach to Clinical Sociology," Edward McDonagh (1944) proposed establishing social research clinics that would use groups to study and solve problems.

George Edmund Haynes's (1946) "Clinical Methods in Interracial and Intercultural Relations" appeared in *The Journal of Educational Sociology*. Haynes was a cofounder of the National Urban League (1910) and the first African American to hold a U.S. government subcabinet post. His 1946 article, written while he was executive secretary of the Department of Race Relations at the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, discussed the department's urban clinics. The clinics were designed to deal with interracial tensions and conflicts by developing limited, concrete programs of action.

## The First University Courses

The first clinical sociology course was taught by Ernest W. Burgess at the University of Chicago. In 1928 and 1929, the course was considered to be a "special" course and did not appear in the catalog. The course was offered as a regular course from 1931 through 1933. The clinical sociology course continued to be listed in the catalog for the next several years but was not taught after 1933.

The university catalogs did not include a description of the clinical sociology course, but it was always listed under the social pathology grouping. All courses in this section dealt with topics such as criminality, punishment, criminal law, organized crime, and personal disorganization. Many students who enrolled in these first clinical sociology courses were placed in child guidance clinics. Clarence E. Glick, for instance, was the staff sociologist at the Lower North Side Child Guidance Clinic and Leonard Cottrell was the clinical sociologist at the South Side Child Guidance Clinic.

Two other universities offered clinical courses in the 1930s—namely, Tulane University and New York University. The Tulane University (1929) course was designed to give students the opportunity to learn about behavior problems and social therapy.

The New York University course, taught by Harvey Warren Zorbaugh, provided undergraduate and graduate preparation for visiting teachers, educational counselors, clinicians, social workers, and school guidance administrators. The major focus of the program was the solution of educational problems and other social dilemmas.

Zorbaugh, a faculty member in the School of Education, along with Agnes Conklin, offered a "Seminar in Clinical Practice" in 1930. The course was intended to qualify students as counselors or advisers dealing with behavioral difficulties in schools. From 1931 through 1933, the clinical practice course, titled "Seminar in Clinical Sociology," was open to graduate students who were engaged in writing theses or conducting research projects in educational guidance and social work.

Harvey Zorbaugh, author of *The Gold Coast and the Slum: A Sociological Study of Chicago's Near North Side* (1929), had been involved with clinics at least since 1924, when Clifford Shaw and Zorbaugh organized two sociological clinics in Chicago. Zorbaugh was associate director of the Lower North Child Guidance Clinic in 1925 and also a founder, in 1928, of New York University's Clinic for the Social Adjustment of the Gifted. Zorbaugh was director of this clinic for intellectually gifted and talented preadolescent children at its inception and was actively involved in its work for more than 15 years. The clinic gave graduate students the opportunity to have supervised experiences in teaching, clinical diagnosis, and treatment of children with behavioral problems.

During the 1953–1954 academic year, Alvin W. Gouldner taught a "Foundations of Clinical Sociology" course at Antioch College in Ohio. The college bulletin provided the following description of the course:

A sociological counterpart to clinical psychology with the group as the unit of diagnosis and therapy. Emphasis on developing skills useful in the diagnosis and therapy of group tensions. Principles of functional analysis, group dynamics, and organizational and small group analysis examined and applied to case histories. Representative research in the area assessed.

## Contemporary Contributions

While publications mentioning clinical sociology appeared at least every few years after the 1930s, the number of publications increased substantially after the founding of the Clinical Sociology Association in 1978. The Association, which later became the Sociological Practice Association, made publications a high priority, particularly in its early years. The *Clinical Sociology Review* and the theme journal, *Sociological Practice*, were published by the Association beginning in the early 1980s. These annual journals were eventually replaced by *Sociological Practice: A Journal of Clinical and Applied Sociology*, a quarterly publication.

The Clinical Sociology Association/Sociological Practice Association had a central role in the development of American clinical sociology. The Association helped make available the world's most extensive collection of teaching, research, and intervention literature (see, e.g., Fritz 2001; Straus 2004) under the label of clinical sociology and it introduced the only clinical sociology certification process.



The Sociological Practice Association's certification process for clinical sociologists was available at the Ph.D. and M.A. levels. The Ph.D.-level process was adopted in 1983 and certification was first awarded in 1984. The Association began to offer M.A.-level certification in 1986. The Sociological Practice Association, along with the Society for Applied Sociology, also put in place the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology. The Commission has set standards for the accreditation of clinical and applied sociology programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The Sociological Practice Association and the Society for Applied Sociology merged in 2005. The name of the new association—the Association of Applied and Clinical Sociology—once again gives name recognition to clinical sociology.

## INTERVENTION AND INTERVENTIONISTS

The basic intervention process with a client system, as outlined by Ronald Lippitt, Jeanne Watson, and Bruce Westley (1958), is divided into seven stages: (1) the client system discovers the need for help, sometimes with the assistance from the change agent; (2) the helping relationship is established and defined; (3) the change problem is identified and clarified; (4) alternative possibilities for change are examined and the goals of the change are established; (5) change efforts are actually attempted; (6) change is generalized and stabilized; and (7) the helping relationship ends or a different type of continuing relationship is defined.

Three points can be made about the stages: (1) initial assessments of the situation may be conducted during the third stage, and process and outcome evaluations may be conducted during a number of the stages; (2) it is possible not only to progress through the stages but to cycle back through them as necessary; and (3) the length of time required for each stage will depend on a number of factors, including the kind of change under consideration.

Clinical sociologists do differ in their areas of expertise and consultation models (e.g., control or influence, extent of citizen participation). A practitioner also may use a general consultation model in her or his practice to analyze, reduce, or solve problems or she or he may use certain approaches depending on the particular areas of application and/or the specific set of circumstances. Bruhn and Rebach (1996:31–67) note that the “creative problem solver” can choose from a number of approaches, including ones they describe as social systems, human ecology, life cycle, and clinical.

It is useful to outline the principles, attitudes, and tools needed by clinical sociologists in conducting interventions. While these may differ somewhat depending on the level of intervention (e.g., individual, community, nation), the following would be among those included: having an ethical framework, practicing inclusiveness, working with

the people's interests and opportunities, encouraging recognition of the viewpoints of others, demonstrating interdependence as a factor in the change process, encouraging capacity building, and having a long-term perspective. Change agents need to be open-minded, have courage, and be able to work well with others.

The characteristics of the client system are particularly important during a period of change. The largest share of work in any change initiative generally must be undertaken by the client system. Therefore, the extent and quality of the change will depend, in large part, on the energy, capability (including available resources), and motivation of the client system.

The context in which change takes place is also very important. The change agent and the client system need to identify and review the internal and external forces that foster or resist change at the onset as well as throughout the process. These forces might be seen as biological, psychological, social/cultural, historical, and/or environmental. This is a particularly creative part of the change agent's work, whether the interventionist is facilitative or directive, and is basic in the selection of intervention tools and techniques for effective, sustainable change.

## Intervention for Socioeconomic Development

As an example, let's consider intervention in the area of socioeconomic development. Development is defined here as a planned and comprehensive economic, social, cultural, and political process, in a defined geographic area, that is rights based and ecologically oriented and aims to continually improve the well-being of the entire population and all of its individuals (Fritz 2005a). Economic development is the process of raising the level of prosperity through increased production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Social development, on the other hand, refers to the complexity of social dynamics (the interplay of social structures, processes, and relationships) and focuses on (1) the social concerns of the people as objects of development and (2) people-centered, participatory approaches to development. The individuals would be actively involved in open, meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits. The comprehensive definition of development (or socioeconomic development) has three components—social development, economic development, and environmental protection.

According to James Midgley (1994), it is not a new idea to link social interventions and economic activities. In the late 1800s, for example, the volunteer workers of the Charity Organization Society in England helped impoverished individuals find employment and start small businesses. In 1954, the British authorities adopted the term “social development” to link social welfare and community development to the economic development efforts in their colonies. The development processes, however, were not smooth or effective for a number of reasons. For

instance, postcolonial development efforts often were centralized, top-down approaches and development strategies in the Global South frequently focused only on economic growth for the benefit of national elites and transnational corporations.

There has been a growing recognition that economic development is a source of dynamic changes and generates wealth but will not, by itself, create prosperity for all. Intervention is required for socioeconomic change. Four points about intervention, as outlined below, are specific to socioeconomic development intervention:

1. Harmony between social and economic interventions. Social interventions should contribute in a positive way to the economy, and economic interventions should improve the quality of people's lives. A review of this situation is particularly important when one or more parts of a client system assume that economic changes will inevitably lead to social progress.

2. Rights-based development. Rights-based development emphasizes the primacy of human rights law and people's ability to determine or strongly influence state policies. Including "rights based" in a definition of development is one way of underscoring the importance of human rights in the development process.

3. Protection of vulnerable populations. These groups could include refugees, immigrants, victims of war, racial/religious/ethnic minorities, children, the elderly, and women. Women, for instance, have been gaining formal rights but this progress has not been matched by an improvement in their quality of life. The hidden barriers and ceilings to women's participation are still in place and the shift to more responsibilities for families and communities has been an increasing burden for women.

4. Appropriate level of intervention. Many countries have had, at some point, national social planning agencies, but the planning approach has weakened or been abandoned over the years because of factors such as indebtedness, lack of resources, or political pressure from groups that were politically conservative and thought that planning should not be done at a national level as well as from advocates of community-based planning. These advocates thought that state agencies often had an inappropriate, top-down style of planning. Development requires a participatory approach to planning; because the levels are interconnected, it is necessary to involve, to some extent, most if not all intervention levels.

Clinical sociologists who work on socioeconomic development issues recognize the need to be able to have access to policymakers and/or work with those interest groups that can effectively lobby for change. Interventionists have to be knowledgeable about the substantive areas under discussion and be culturally competent, able to effectively work with teams, and knowledgeable about how to encourage public participation and media coverage. They recognize

the importance of working on all relevant intervention levels to help foster an effective, sustainable, rights-based development process.

## THEORIES AND RESEARCH METHODS

Clinical sociologists frequently have training in more than one discipline and a great deal of experience in working with intervention teams whose members have a variety of backgrounds. Because of this, clinical sociologists integrate and use a broad range of theoretical approaches and, if they conduct research or collaborate with researchers, also have exposure to or use a range of research methods.

Epistemology, theory, and research methods are linked. The kind of research methods used and the ways in which they are used will generally reflect the epistemology and theories held by the interventionist or those responsible for the intervention.

### Research Methods

Clinical sociologists who conduct research use a wide variety of research methods and techniques such as participatory action research, geographic information systems, evaluations, focus group analysis, and surveys. But clinical sociologists probably are best known for their case studies. Case studies involve systematically assembling and analyzing detailed, in-depth information about a person, place, event, or group. This methodological approach involves many techniques such as document analysis, life histories, in-depth interviews, and participant observation.

Sometimes the cases are directly related to intervention work (e.g., a critical evaluation of program outcomes) and sometimes they are analyses of situations (real or based on reality) that will be of assistance to policymakers and administrators who are considering interventions. An example of that kind of work would be the analysis of the tobacco control interventions in "Well City" (Fritz, Bistak, and Auffrey 2000), which included a list of lessons/intervention considerations.

### Theories and Models

Clinical sociologists, in good part because of their interdisciplinary training and work experience, use a wide range of theories. Among the theories frequently used by clinical sociologists are grounded, standpoint, multicultural-liberationist, systems, conflict, interactionist, critical, and social exchange. Theories, implicitly or explicitly, are a basis for the models that explain how practitioners should function. According to Lang and Taylor (2000), "models represent appropriate, aspirational, or best practices; they include guidelines for implementing them" (p. 101).

Clinical sociologists use existing theory to formulate models that will be helpful in identifying and understanding problems and also to identify strategies to reduce or

solve these problems. Clinical sociologists also have shown that practice can have an influence on existing theories and help in the development of new ones.

Each of the areas of practice can have their own models. It might be useful to take one area of practice—mediation, for example—and briefly examine the theories and models used by practitioners coming from different disciplinary backgrounds.

## Mediation

Mediation, an area of expertise for some clinical sociologists, is a semistructured, creative process in which one or more impartial individuals assist disputants (Fritz 2004; Vraneski 2006). Mediators usually “learn a particular model and approach to mediation that encompasses guidelines, rules, procedures, and ways of understanding mediation practice” (Lang and Taylor 2000:101).

Stage models are frequently used for organizational and community disputes. One such model, according to Jennifer Beer (1997), has seven stages: opening statement, uninterrupted time for each person to speak, exchange, setting the agenda, building the agreement, writing the agreement, and closing. Beer notes that separate meetings (small caucuses of some participants and/or the mediator and one or more participants) can be held at any time during the mediation. Another model, developed by Jacqueline Morineau (1998:83–88), has three stages: theory, crisis, and catharsis. Lascoux (2001:161–167) discusses a six-stage model with the first stage (creation of context) being “the most delicate and the longest.” Haynes (1994) describes a five-stage family mediation model in which the mediator continues to cycle through the stages as often as necessary. During the first stage of this model, the mediator gathers, verifies, and shares the data.

The stages in the stage models are frequently not distinct and will differ depending on factors such as culture; mediator, sponsor, or party preference; specialization; type of mediation; and complexity of case. Some models may be ones in which no or few stages are specified or expected while other models have many stages. A complicated community environmental dispute, for instance, might begin with a period in which possible participants are identified and discuss the likelihood that all will participate in some kind of conflict analysis. This group might then hold a series of facilitated sessions in which procedures are developed and approved that would be used in a mediation. All this preliminary work would take place before what one might think of as the actual mediation. Christopher Moore (2003:67–69), in his 12-stage model of mediation, devotes the first five stages to the period *before* the meetings to discuss the problem/situation that actually takes place.

Even if there was one model that could be used in all or most situations, there can be differences, at times, in the order of the stages or in the length of time devoted to certain stages. There also will be differences in the way mediators and organizations that hire mediators rely on the

models. The models each provide a general flow for cases but there will be a range in their use by practitioners—from those who rigidly follow a prescribed model to those who would not think of doing so.

The model or models used by American mediators are related to their approaches to mediation (participant centered, solution oriented, transformative, narrative, and humanist/integrated process) (Fritz 2004). The models and approaches are grounded in theory. The theories would include those that are biologically based (e.g., social Darwinism, ethology, sociobiology), focused on the individual (e.g., social learning, social exchange, psychotherapy), and focused on social/political situations (e.g., sociotherapy, systems, conflict, multicultural/liberationist, land ethic, humanism).

The humanist/integrated process (HIP) approach, the preferred approach of some American clinical sociologists, emphasizes humanism, cultural competency, empowerment, respect, and creativity (Fritz 2006). The mediator is reflective in continually assessing the interaction between/among the parties and among the parties and the mediator. The HIP mediator is participant centered but flexible in terms of stages and approaches. Depending on the circumstances of the mediation, the mediator may integrate aspects of any of the other mediation approaches (e.g., transformative, solution oriented).

Frequently, the HIP approach is multicultural/liberationist and based on a particular view of humanist theory. This humanism, focusing on free and responsible individual choices, includes respectful consideration of the natural environment and fits very well with Aldo Leopold’s (1949) land ethic theory. Leopold indicated that “a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it” (p. 204).

Mediation, like other areas of clinical practice, has a variety of theories and models that may be used as guideposts. Creative dispute intervention means that theories, models, and intervention strategies may be adjusted as the work proceeds; new or refined models, theories, and intervention strategies are seen as a normal part of the creative process.

## GLOBAL CLINICAL SOCIOLOGY

Interest in clinical sociology has been growing in a number of countries. For example, French is the predominant language of many, if not most, of the current international clinical sociology conferences, and books and articles have appeared with clinical sociology in the title in France and Québec, Canada. The French and French-Canadian clinical sociologists emphasize clinical analysis although some also are involved in intervention. They have a solid international network and have done an excellent job of attracting nonsociologists to that network. Their literature is substantial. Particularly notable is the work of Jacques van Bockstaele and Maria van Bockstaele (van Bockstaele et al. 1963, 1968), Robert Sevigny (1997; Sevigny et al.

2006), Eugene Enriquez (1992, 1997; Enriquez et al. 1993), Vincent de Gaulejac and Shirley Roy (1993), and Jacques Rheume (1997). The van Bockstaeles (2004), who have worked as organizational consultants for many years, have published a book on socioanalysis and Jacques Rheume and his colleagues in Montreal are completing a book on the development of clinical sociology in Québec.

For many years, Italians have hosted clinical sociology conferences, published clinical sociology books and articles, and hosted numerous clinical sociology training workshops. If one is interested in learning about clinical sociology in Italy, one would want to review the work of Michelina Tosi and Francesco Battisti (1995) and publications by Lucio Luison. Luison's (1998) book, *Introduzione alla Sociologia clinica (Introduction to Clinical Sociology)*, contains 13 chapters written by Americans. Everardo Minardi, an editor of a book on action research (Minardi and Cifello 2005), is the head of a graduate program in clinical sociology. The Clinical Sociology Association in Italy, which has been headed by Giuseppe Gargano, is one of four sociological practice organizations.

Clinical sociology is also found in other parts of the world such as Greece, Brazil, Mexico, Japan, and Malaysia. According to Yuji Noguchi (personal communication, January 20, 2005), clinical sociology was first noted in Japan in 1994 and the first textbooks were published in 2000 and 2001. Noguchi says there still is discussion of the definition and theoretical frameworks, but

the Japanese also share with Americans "a practical concern with problem solving." Japanese clinical sociology focuses on health and illness. In Malaysia, A. Halim Wan (2004a, 2004b) has started a professional organization of clinical sociologists and is writing two books about the field. One of the volumes focuses on the development of clinical sociology and the other is about his extensive experience as a practitioner.

The international development of clinical sociology has been supported primarily by three organizations. The clinical sociology division of the International Sociological Association (ISA) was organized in 1982 at the ISA world congress in Mexico City. Clinical sociologists also are members of another ISA section—the sociotechnics/sociological practice division. The other major influence is the clinical sociology section of the Association internationale des sociologues de la langue française (International Association of French Language Sociologists).

American scholar practitioners, with their focus on intervention, have had a strong role in the development of the field of clinical sociology but now are only one of many national influences shaping the emerging global specialization. Worldwide, clinical sociologists continue to be interested in health care, quality of life, national social policy, organizational development, conflict intervention, and individual development. More recent clinical areas of analysis, research, and intervention include public participation, environmental protection, tourism, globalization, rights-based socioeconomic development, and security—all major issues in an at-risk world.

## EVALUATION RESEARCH

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To evaluate is to determine the value of something, that is, to determine its merit, worth, or significance. Evaluation research is the systematic application of scientific research procedures to inform evaluative judgments. Program evaluation, as one particular focus of this process, involves the systematic collection of empirical information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program's merit or worth, improve program effectiveness and/or inform decisions about future programming. *Merit* refers to the intrinsic value of a program, for example, how effective it is in meeting the needs of those it is intended to help. In schools, this means determining to what extent students are learning what they need to know. *Worth*, in contrast, refers to extrinsic value to those outside the program, for example, to the larger community or society. A welfare program that gets jobs for recipients has *merit* for those who move out of poverty and worth to society by reducing welfare costs. *Significance* involves determining the relevance and importance of evaluation research findings, for example, the extent one can confidently attribute observed outcomes to the program intervention.

This matter of defining evaluation is of considerable import because different evaluation approaches rest on different definitions. One traditional approach has been to define program evaluation as determining the extent to which a program attains its goals. However, as the practice of evaluation has evolved, program evaluation can and does involve examining much more than goal attainment. For example, evaluation research can include assessing the fidelity of program implementation, illuminating variations in program processes, searching for unanticipated

consequences, and measuring actual needs in relation to immediate outcomes and long-term impacts. Measuring goal attainment, then, takes too narrow a focus to encompass the variety of ways evaluation research can be useful.

Evaluation researchers may use a variety of social science research methods to gather information, but they may also use management information system data, program monitoring statistics, or other forms of systematic information that are not specifically research oriented. Evaluation research is a type of applied interdisciplinary social science and thereby differs fundamentally from basic research in the purpose of data collection and standards for judging quality. Basic scientific research is undertaken to discover new knowledge, test theories, establish truth, and generalize across time and space. Program evaluation is undertaken to inform decisions, clarify options, identify improvements, and provide information about programs and policies within contextual boundaries of time, place, values, and politics. The difference between basic research and evaluation research is the difference between conclusion-oriented and decision-oriented inquiry. *Conclusion-oriented basic research* aims to produce knowledge and test theory. *Decision-oriented evaluation research* informs and supports policy making, program decision making, and improvements in programs to increase effectiveness.

### DIVERSITY IN EVALUATION RESEARCH

Evaluation research is characterized by enormous diversity. From large-scale, long-term, international comparative

designs costing millions of dollars to small, short evaluations of a single component in a local agency, the variety is vast. Contrasts include internal versus external evaluations; outcomes versus process evaluation; experimental designs versus case studies; mandated accountability systems versus voluntary management efforts; academic studies versus informal action research by program staff; and published, polished evaluation reports versus oral briefings and discussions where no written report is ever generated. Then there are combinations and permutations of these contrasting approaches. To understand and appreciate this diversity it is helpful to understand the emergence and development of evaluation as a field of professional practice.

### The Emergence of Evaluation as a Profession

Education has long been a primary target for evaluation, dominated by achievement testing. During the Cold War, after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik in 1957, calls for better educational assessments accompanied a critique born of fear that the education gap was even larger than the missile gap. Demand for better evaluations also accompanied the growing realization that, in years after the 1954 Supreme Court Brown decision requiring racial integration of schools, “separate and unequal” was still the norm rather than the exception. Passage of the U.S. Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 contributed greatly to more comprehensive approaches to evaluation. The massive influx of federal money aimed at desegregation, innovation, compensatory education, greater equality of opportunity, teacher training, and higher student achievement was accompanied by calls for evaluation data to assess the effects on the nation’s children. Policymakers were asking: To what extent did these changes really make an educational difference?

But education was only one arena for evaluation. Evaluation in the United States emerged in response to the demand to assess the federal projects spawned by the Great Society legislation of the 1960s. When the U.S. federal government began to take a major role in alleviating poverty, hunger, and joblessness during the Depression of the 1930s, the closest thing to evaluation was the employment of a few jobless academics to write program histories. It was not until the massive federal expenditures on an awesome assortment of programs during the 1960s and 1970s that accountability began to mean more than assessing staff sincerity or political head counts of opponents and proponents.

Great Society programs from the Office of Economic Opportunity were aimed at nothing less than the elimination of poverty. The creation of large-scale federal health programs, including community mental health centers, was coupled with a mandate for evaluation, often at a level of 1 to 3 percent of program budgets. Other major programs were created in housing, employment, services integration, community planning, urban renewal, welfare, criminal justice reform, community health care, and racial

integration. In the 1970s, these Great Society programs collided head on with the Vietnam War, rising inflation, increasing taxes, and the fall from glory of Keynesian economics.

Program evaluation as a distinct field of professional practice was born of two lessons from this period of large-scale social experimentation and government intervention: first, the realization that there is not enough money to do all the things that citizens may want or demand and, second, that even if there were enough money, it takes more than money to solve complex human and social problems. As not everything can be done, there must be a basis for deciding which things are worth doing. Evaluation held the promise of helping determine where scarce resources could be best allocated for maximum impact.

While pragmatists turned to evaluation as a commonsensical way to figure out what works and is worth funding, visionaries were conceptualizing evaluation as the centerpiece of a new kind of society: *the experimenting society*. Donald T. Campbell gave voice to this vision in his 1971 address to the American Psychological Association as follows:

The experimenting society will be one which will vigorously try out proposed solutions to recurrent problems, which will make hard-headed and multidimensional evaluations of the outcomes, and which will move on to other alternatives when evaluation shows one reform to have been ineffective or harmful. We do not have such a society today. (Campbell 1991:223)

Early visions for evaluation, then, focused on evaluation’s expected role in guiding funding decisions and differentiating the wheat from the chaff in federal programs. But as evaluations were implemented, a new role emerged: helping improve programs as they were implemented. The Great Society programs floundered on a host of problems: management weaknesses, cultural issues, and failure to take into account the enormously complex systems that contributed to poverty. Wanting to help is not the same as knowing how to help; likewise, having the money to help is not the same as knowing how to spend money in a helpful way. Many “War on Poverty” programs turned out to be patronizing, controlling, dependency generating, insulting, inadequate, misguided, overpromised, wasteful, and mismanaged. Evaluators were called on not only to offer final judgments about the overall effectiveness of programs but also to gather process data and provide feedback to help solve programming problems along the way.

By the mid-1970s, interest in evaluation had grown to the point where two professional organizations were established: the academically oriented Evaluation Research Society and the practitioner-oriented Evaluation Network. In 1984, they merged to form the American Evaluation Association. By that time, interest in evaluation had become international with establishment of the Canadian Evaluation Society and the

Australasian Evaluation Society. In 1995, the international evaluation conference in Vancouver, Canada, included participation from new professional evaluation associations representing members of the European Evaluation Society. By 2004, there were over 40 national evaluation associations around the world and a new umbrella organization, the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (Mertens 2005). Another organization formed to focus on evaluation in developing countries, the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEA). In 2005, in Toronto, Canada, participants in the international evaluation conference represented 55 countries.

## STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE FOR EVALUATION

One major contribution of the professionalization of evaluation has been articulation of standards for evaluation. Before the field of evaluation identified and adopted its own standards, criteria for judging evaluations could scarcely be differentiated from criteria for judging research in the traditional social and behavioral sciences, namely, technical quality and methodological rigor. Methods decisions dominated the evaluation design process. Methodological rigor meant experimental designs, quantitative data, and sophisticated statistical analysis. Whether decision makers understood such analyses was not the researcher's problem. Validity, reliability, measurability, and generalizability were the dimensions that received the greatest attention in judging evaluation research proposals and reports.

It was in this context that evaluation standards were developed by a 17-member committee appointed by 12 professional organizations, including the American Sociological Association, in deliberations that spanned five years with input from hundreds of practicing evaluation professionals. The standards published by the Joint Committee on Standards in 1981 dramatically reflected the ways in which the practice of evaluation had matured. The standards identified four areas of quality for judging evaluation research: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. Just prior to publication, Dan Stufflebeam (1980), Chair of the Committee, summarized the committee's work as follows:

I think it is interesting that the Joint Committee decided on that particular order [utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy]. Their rationale is that an evaluation should not be done at all if there is no prospect for its being useful to some audience. Second, it should not be done if it is not feasible to conduct it in political terms, or practicality terms, or cost effectiveness terms. Third, they do not think it should be done if we cannot demonstrate that it will be conducted fairly and ethically. Finally, if we can demonstrate that an evaluation will have utility, will be feasible and will be proper in its

conduct, then they said we could turn to the difficult matters of the technical adequacy of the evaluation. (P. 90)

In 1994 and again in 2006 (forthcoming), revised standards were published following extensive reviews spanning several years (<http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/jc/>). While some changes were made in the 30 individual standards, the overarching framework of four primary criteria remained unchanged: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. In particular, the standards made the criterion of use ascendant and primary. No matter how technically rigorous an evaluation research study may be, by the criteria of the standards, if the findings from an evaluation are not used, it is an inadequate evaluation.

## Evaluation Use and the Sociology of Knowledge

The use of evaluation research can be viewed as a special application of the sociology of knowledge. The question of evaluation use became for evaluation professionals what sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) called a critical public issue:

*Issues* have to do with matters that transcend these local environments of the individual and the range of his inner life. They have to do with the organization of many such milieus into the institutions of an historical society as a whole. . . . An issue, in fact, often involves a crisis in institutional arrangements. (Pp. 8–9)

The challenge of using evaluation in appropriate and meaningful ways represents just such a crisis in institutional arrangements. How evaluations are used affects the spending of billions of dollars to fight problems of poverty, disease, ignorance, joblessness, mental anguish, crime, hunger, and inequality. The issues include determining how programs aimed at combating societal ills are to be judged, how to distinguish effective from ineffective programs, how evaluations can be conducted in ways that lead to use, and how evaluation researchers avoid producing reports that gather dust on bookshelves, unread and unused. Those are the issues the utilization literature in evaluation address and that sociology of knowledge informs.

The issue of use has emerged at the interface between science and action, between knowing and doing, and is therefore a problem of applied sociology. Evaluation use raises fundamental questions about human rationality, decision making, and knowledge applied to creation of a better world.

The challenge of evaluation use epitomizes the more general challenge of knowledge use in contemporary society. Technology in the contemporary epoch, variously called The Information Age, The Communications Age, or The Knowledge Age, has developed the capacity to generate, store, retrieve, transmit, and instantaneously

communicate information and knowledge. Our problem is keeping up with, sorting out, absorbing, and *using* information. Our technological capacity for gathering and computerizing information now far exceeds our human ability to process and make sense out of it all. We're constantly faced with deciding what's worth knowing versus what to ignore.

Getting people to use what is known has become a critical concern across the different knowledge sectors of society. A major specialty in medicine (compliance research) is dedicated to understanding why so many people fail to follow their doctor's orders. Common problems of information use underlie trying to get people to use seat belts, quit smoking, begin exercising, eat properly, and pay attention to evaluation findings. In the fields of nutrition, energy conservation, education, criminal justice, financial investment, human services, corporate management, international development—the list could go on and on—a central problem, often *the* central problem, is getting people to apply what is already known.

These examples of the challenges of putting knowledge to use set a general context for an applied sociology of knowledge approach to evaluation use: narrowing the gap between generating evaluation findings and actually using those findings for program decision making and improvement.

## Evaluation and Rationality

Edward Suchman (1967) began his classic text on evaluation research with Hans Zetterberg's observation that "one of the most appealing ideas of our century is the notion that science can be put to work to provide solutions to social problems" (p. 1). Social and behavioral science embodied the hope of finally applying human rationality to the improvement of society. In 1961, Harvard-educated President John F. Kennedy welcomed scientists to the White House as never before. Scientific perspectives were taken into account in the writing of new social legislation. Economists, historians, psychologists, political scientists, and sociologists were all welcomed into the public arena to share in the reshaping of modern postindustrial society. They dreamed of and worked for a new order of rationality in government—a rationality undergirded by social scientists who, if not philosopher-kings themselves, were at least ministers to philosopher-kings. Sociologist Carol Weiss (1974) has captured the optimism of that period as follows:

There was much hoopla about the rationality that social science would bring to the untidy world of government. It would provide hard data for planning . . . and give cause-and-effect theories for policy making, so that statesmen would know which variables to alter in order to effect the desired outcomes. It would bring to the assessment of alternative policies a knowledge of relative costs and benefits so

that decision-makers could select the options with the highest payoff. And once policies were in operation, it would provide objective evaluation of their effectiveness so that necessary modifications could be made to improve performance. (P. 4)

By the end of the 1960s, it was becoming clear that evaluations of "Great Society" social programs were largely ignored or politicized. The utopian hopes for a scientific and rational society had somehow failed to be realized. The landing of the first human on the moon came and went, but poverty persisted despite the 1960's "War" on it—and research was still not being used as the basis for government decision making. Producing data is one thing, but putting such data to use is quite another matter. In the final analysis, the test of the effectiveness of outcome data is its impact on implemented policy. By this standard, there are significant questions about the number of successful evaluation studies for it has proved difficult to document many instances where evaluation research has had a direct effect on policy even when it has been specifically commissioned by government.

Nor is the challenge only one of increasing use. A parallel issue is that of misuse of findings. Evaluators must attend to *appropriate* use, not just amount of use. Results from poorly conceived studies have frequently been given wide publicity and findings from good studies have been improperly used. The field faces a dual challenge then: supporting and enhancing appropriate uses while also working to eliminate improper uses.

## Diffusion of Innovations

The diffusion of innovations literature central to rural sociology has examined and attempted to explain the characteristics of innovations that affect adoption and dissemination (Rogers 1962; Rogers and Svenning 1969; Rogers and Shoemaker 1971). This was the framework that informed some early empirical work on evaluation use, for example, an inquiry that was the basis for the first edition of *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Patton 1978). That work was grounded in case studies of evaluations to find out what characteristics were associated with use (a form of adoption from a diffusion of innovations perspective). A related field in organizational sociology focuses on the characteristics of innovative organizations.

## Power and Evaluation Use

Another root sociological influence in understanding evaluation use has been theories of power that illuminate what evaluation offers stakeholders and intended users. Examining evaluation from this perspective provides a basis for understanding how knowledge is power, which led to the following premise: Use of evaluation will occur



in direct proportion to its power-enhancing capability. Power-enhancing capability is determined as follows: The power of evaluation varies directly with the degree to which the findings reduce the uncertainty of action for specific stakeholders (Patton 1997).

This view of the relationship between evaluation and power is derived from the classic organizational theories of Michael Crozier (1964) and James Thompson (1967). Crozier (1964) studied and compared a French clerical agency and tobacco factory. He found that power relationships developed around uncertainties that resulted from information hoarding. Crozier found that supervisors in the clerical agency had no interest in passing information on to their superiors, the section chiefs. Section chiefs, in turn, competed with one another for attention from their superior—the division head. Section chiefs distorted the information they passed up to the division head to enhance their own positions. Section chiefs could get away with distortions because the lower-level supervisors, who knew the truth, were interested in keeping what they knew to themselves. The division head, on the other hand, used the information he received to schedule production and assign work. Knowing that he was dependent on information from others, and not being able to fully trust that information, his decisions were carefully conservative in the sense that he aimed only at safe, minimal levels of achievement because he knew he lacked sufficient information to narrow risks.

The power of prediction stems to a major extent from the way information is distributed. The whole system of roles is so arranged that people are given information, the possibility of prediction and therefore control, precisely because of their position within the hierarchical pattern. (P. 158)

Whereas Crozier's (1964) analysis centered on power relationships and uncertainties between individuals and among groups within organizations, James Thompson (1967) found that a similar set of concepts could be applied to understand relationships between whole organizations. He argued that organizations are open systems that need resources and materials from outside and that "with this conception the central problem for complex organizations is one of coping with uncertainty" (p. 13). He found that assessment and evaluation are used by people in organizations as mechanisms for reducing uncertainty, enhancing predictability, and increasing their control over the multitude of contingencies with which they are faced. Information for prediction is information for control, thus the power of evaluation. To be power laden, information must be relevant and in a form that is understandable to users. Crozier (1964) recognized this qualifier in linking power to reduced uncertainty: "One should be precise and specify *relevant* uncertainty. . . . People and organizations will care only about what they can recognize as affecting them and, in turn, what is possibly within their control" (p. 158).

## Politics and the Personal Factor

The dominant Weberian perspective in organizational sociology posits that organizations are made up of and operate based on positions, roles, and norms such that the individuality of people matters little because individuals are socialized to occupy specific roles and positions, and behave according to specific learned norms, all for the greater good of the organization's goal attainment. From this perspective, organizations are an impersonal collection of hierarchical positions. However, people in organizations use evaluation findings. The import of this distinction is illustrated in the findings of a classic study of 20 federal health evaluations that assessed how the findings had been used and sought to identify the factors that affected varying degrees of use (Patton et al. 1977). Respondents were asked to comment on how, if at all, each of 11 factors extracted from the literature on diffusion of innovations and evaluation use had affected use of their study. These factors were methodological quality, methodological appropriateness, timeliness, lateness of report, positive or negative findings, surprise of findings, central or peripheral program objectives evaluated, presence or absence of related studies, political factors, decision maker/evaluator interactions, and resources available for the study. Finally, respondents were asked to "pick out the single factor you feel had the greatest effect on how this study was used."

From this long list of questions only two factors emerged as consistently important in explaining use: (1) political considerations and (2) a factor called "the personal factor." The personal factor is the presence of an identifiable individual or group of people who personally care about the evaluation and the findings it generates. Where such a person or group was present, evaluations were used; where the personal factor was absent, there was a correspondingly marked absence of evaluation impact.

The personal factor represents the leadership, interest, enthusiasm, determination, commitment, assertiveness, and caring of specific, individual people. These are people who actively seek information to make judgments and reduce decision uncertainties. They want to increase their ability to predict the outcomes of programmatic activity and thereby enhance their own discretion as decision makers, policy makers, consumers, program participants, funders, or whatever roles they play. These are the primary users of evaluation. Studies that were not used stood out in that there was often a clear absence of the personal factor. Thus, the challenge of increasing use has come to consist of two parts: (1) finding and involving those who are, by inclination, information users and (2) training those not so inclined.

## Goals-Based Evaluation Research

When Alice encounters the Cheshire cat in Wonderland (Carroll 2006) she asks,

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the cat.

"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," said the cat.

"—so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the cat, "if you only walk long enough." (P. 40).

This story carries a classic evaluation message: To evaluate how well you're doing, you must have some place you're trying to get to. For programs, this has meant having goals and evaluating goal attainment. For evaluators, this means clarifying the intended uses of a particular evaluation. Goals-based evaluation focuses on assessing the extent to which a program attains its stated goals. For rigorous evaluation, program goals should be clear, specific, and measurable. Often, these conditions are not met. Evaluators routinely experience difficulties in assessing goal attainment because of vague and fuzzy goals, conflicts over goals among various stakeholders, and multiple goals articulated without prioritizing. Moreover, distortions can result when program staff pays too much attention to whatever an evaluator decides to measure, essentially giving the evaluator the power to determine what activities become primary in a program. This is expressed in the commonly heard mantra: What gets measured gets done. An example is when teachers focus on having students pass a reading test rather than whether they learn to read. The result can be students who pass mandated competency tests but are still functionally illiterate.

A particularly sociological critique of goals is that they are social constructions that are easily and often reified, that is, they are inherently organizational abstractions treated as if they are real. In an organizational sociology classic, Cyert and March (1963:28) asserted that *individual people have goals, collectivities of people do not*. They likewise asserted that only individuals can act; organizations or programs, as such, cannot be said to take action. The future state desired by an organization (its goals) is nothing but a function of individual aspirations. This is in keeping with the emphasis on the importance of the personal factor, discussed above, that has taken on prominence in the utilization literature within evaluation research. Individuals use evaluations, not organizations.

Still, organizational sociologists and evaluation researchers find it useful to assume that organizations are purposive despite the difficulties of actually measuring the goals of an organization—that is, treating the organization rather than its individuals as the unit of analysis. Aggregating survey responses from members of an organization doesn't quite make the organization the unit of analysis. Thus, organizational sociologists and evaluation researchers find the purposive image helpful but still elusive. In the end, most evaluation researchers today

continue to follow the pragmatic logic of organizational sociologist Charles Perrow (1970) articulated decades ago:

For our purposes we shall use the concept of an organizational goal as if there were no question concerning its legitimacy, even though we recognize that there are legitimate objections to doing so. Our present state of conceptual development, linguistic practices, and ontology offers us no alternative. (P. 134)

Evaluators, like Perrow, are likely to come down on the side of practicality. The language of goals will continue to dominate evaluation. However, the sociological debate clarifies that difficulties in clarifying a program's goals may be due to problems inherent in the notion of goals rather than staff incompetence, intransigence, or opposition to evaluation.

Because of the importance of goals to evaluation research, an evaluation process may begin with an *evaluability assessment* to determine the program's readiness for evaluation. The evaluator works with program managers to help them get ready for evaluation by clarifying goals, finding out various stakeholders' views of important issues, and specifying the model or intervention to be assessed. To do a rigorous and meaningful evaluation, the evaluator may have to make up for deficiencies in program design. Thus, by default, the evaluator becomes a program or organizational developer.

Evaluators may also be called on to move the unit of analysis from the program to the entire organization. *Mission-oriented evaluation* is an organizational development approach that involves assessing the extent to which the various units and activities of the organization are consistent with its mission, and then determining the degree of mission attainment. In recent years, with an emphasis on creating "learning organizations," evaluators have been paying increasing attention to the organizational context within which evaluations occur as well as evaluating overall organizational effectiveness and mission attainment.

## Turbulent Environments and Goals

How much to seek clarity about goals will depend, among other things, on the program's developmental status and environment. Organizational sociologists have discovered that the clarity and stability of goals are contingent on the organization's environment, especially varying degrees of uncertainty facing the organization. Uncertainty includes things like funding stability, changes in rules and regulations, mobility and transience of clients and suppliers, and political, economic, or social turbulence. What is important about this work from an evaluation perspective is the finding that the degree of uncertainty facing an organization directly affects the degree to which goals and strategies for attaining goals can be made concrete and stable. The less certain the environment, the less stable and less concrete the organization's goals will be. Effective

organizations in turbulent environments adapt their goals to changing demands and conditions.

## VARIOUS EVALUATION RESEARCH PURPOSES

Evaluation findings can serve three primary purposes: rendering judgments, facilitating improvements, and/or generating knowledge. Judgments are undergirded by the accountability perspective; improvements are informed by a developmental perspective; and generating knowledge operates from the knowledge perspective of academic values. These are by no means inherently conflicting purposes and some evaluations strive to incorporate all three approaches, but one of these purposes is likely to become the dominant motif in any given effort and prevail as the *primary* purpose informing design decisions and priority uses; or else, different aspects of an evaluation are designed, compartmentalized, and sequenced to address these contrasting purposes. Confusion among these quite different purposes, or failure to prioritize them, is often the source of problems and misunderstandings in evaluation, and can become disastrous at the end when it turns out that different intended users had different expectations and priorities.

In judgment-oriented evaluations, specifying the criteria for judgment is central and critical. Different stakeholders will bring different criteria to the task of judging a program's effectiveness. *Summative evaluation* constitutes an important purpose distinction in any menu of alternative evaluation purposes. Summative evaluations judge the overall effectiveness of a program and deal with the problem of attributing measured results to the program intervention. Summative evaluations are particularly important in making decisions about continuing or terminating an experimental program or demonstration project. As such, summative evaluations are often requested by funders. In judgment-oriented evaluations, the logic of valuing rules. Four steps are necessary: (1) select criteria of merit; (2) set standards of performance; (3) measure performance; and (4) synthesize results into a judgment of value. This is clearly a deductive approach.

Summative evaluation contrasts with *formative evaluation*, which focuses on ways of improving and enhancing programs rather than rendering definitive judgment about effectiveness. In contrast to summative evaluations, improvement-oriented (formative) evaluations often use an inductive approach in which criteria are less formal as one searches openly for whatever areas of strengths or weaknesses may emerge from looking at what's happening in the program.

Using evaluation results to improve a program turns out, in practice, to be fundamentally different from rendering judgment about overall effectiveness, merit or worth. Improvement-oriented forms of evaluation include formative evaluation, quality enhancement, responsive

evaluation, learning organization approaches, humanistic evaluation, and total quality management, among others. What these approaches share is a focus on making things better rather than rendering summative judgment. Judgment-oriented evaluation requires explicit criteria and values that form the basis for judgment. Improvement-oriented approaches tend to be more open-ended, gathering varieties of data about strengths and weaknesses with the expectation that both will be found and each can be used to inform an ongoing cycle of reflection and innovation. Program management, staff, and sometimes participants tend to be the primary users of improvement-oriented findings, whereas funders and external decision makers tend to use summative evaluation. Improvement-oriented evaluations aim to determine the program's strengths and weaknesses, the extent to which participants are progressing toward desired outcomes, which types of participants are making good progress and which types aren't doing so well, and what kinds of implementation problems have emerged. The formative evaluator looks for unexpected consequences and possible side effects. It is especially important to gather data about how staff and clients are interacting, and to gather data on staff and participant perceptions of the program, finding out what they like, dislike, and want to change. Data on perceptions of the program's culture and climate may be part of the evaluation. The evaluation may examine how funds are being used compared with initial plans and how the program's external environment is affecting internal operations, looking for efficiencies that might be realized. In formative evaluation, it is especially important to gather evaluative feedback from program participants who receive services and to take that feedback seriously.

One classic metaphor explaining the difference between summative and formative evaluation is that when the cook tastes the soup, that's formative; when the guests taste the soup, that's summative.

Both summative and formative evaluations involve the *instrumental* use of results. Instrumental use occurs when a decision or action follows, at least in part, from the evaluation. Evaluations are seldom the sole basis for subsequent summative decisions or program improvements, but, when well done, they can contribute, often substantially, to programmatic decision making.

## Alternative Ways of Focusing Evaluations

As just noted, different types of evaluation research can ask different questions and focus on different purposes. Various options can be and often are used together within the same evaluation, or options can be implemented in sequence over a period of time, for example, doing implementation evaluation before doing outcomes evaluation, or formative evaluation before summative evaluation. Below are some examples of alternative evaluation types (left column) and their defining question in relation to key sociological issues (right column, italics).

<i>Focus or Type of Evaluation</i>	<i>Defining Question/Approach and Sociological Contribution</i>
Accreditation focus	Does the program meet minimum standards for accreditation or licensing? <i>Sociology of professions</i>
Compliance focus	Are rules and regulations being followed? <i>Sociological sensitivity to formal rules versus informal norms</i>
Comparative focus and contextual analysis	How do two or more programs compare in different contexts? What are the environments within which the program operates politically, socially, economically culturally, and scientifically? How does this context affect program effectiveness? <i>Comparative sociology</i>
Diversity focus	The evaluation gives voice to different perspectives on and illuminates various experiences with the program. <i>Constructivist sociology and sociology of knowledge</i>
Empowerment evaluation	The evaluation is conducted in a way that affirms participants' self-determination and builds capacity to evaluate themselves. <i>Sociological sensitivity to power differentials</i>
Longitudinal evaluation	What happens to the program and to participants over time? <i>Methodological issues in longitudinal sociological designs</i>
Norm-referenced approach	How does this program population compare to some specific norm or reference group selected variables? <i>Comparative sociology</i>
Social and community indicators	What routine social and economic data should be monitored to assess the impacts of this program? What is the connection between program outcomes and larger-scale social indicators, for example, crime rates? <i>Community sociology</i>
Utilization-focused evaluation	What information is needed and wanted by primary intended users that will actually be used for program improvement and decision making? <i>Sociology of knowledge</i>

## Conceptual Use of Evaluation Findings

The preceding examples offer various ways of focusing evaluations to achieve what earlier was emphasized as the *instrumental use* of findings, that is, using evaluations to make program improvements and overall summative judgments about a program's merit or worth. *Conceptual use of findings*, on the other hand, contrasts with instrumental use in that no decision or action is expected; rather, it is the use of evaluations to influence thinking about issues in a general way. The evaluation findings contribute by increasing knowledge. This knowledge can be as specific as clarifying a program's model, testing theory, distinguishing types of interventions, figuring out how to measure outcomes, generating lessons learned, and/or elaborating policy options. One form of conceptual use is called "enlightenment," a distinction aimed at describing the effects of evaluation findings being disseminated to the larger policy community where they may affect the terms of debate. Generalizations from evaluation research can become part of the knowledge base for policy making. Case studies of evaluations and decisions tend to show that generalizations and ideas that come from research and evaluation help shape the development of policy.

One formal knowledge-oriented approach is called *theory-driven evaluation*. This connection of evaluation research to social science theory tends to focus on increasing knowledge about how effective programs work in general. For example, results from evaluations can contribute to theories about how to solve societal problems or produce important sustainable social innovation. Theory-driven evaluation can be aimed at particular aspects of the programming process, for example, implementation theory aimed at better understanding the nature of program delivery. Such knowledge-generating efforts focus beyond the effectiveness of a particular program to future program designs and policy formulation in general.

As the field of evaluation has matured and a vast number of evaluations has accumulated, the opportunity has arisen to look across findings about specific programs to formulate generalizations about effectiveness. This involves synthesizing findings from different studies. An early and important example of synthesis evaluation was Lisbeth Schorr's (1988:256–83) *Within Our Reach*, a study of programs aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty. She identified "the lessons of successful programs" as follows:

- Offering a broad spectrum of services
- Regularly crossing traditional, professional, and bureaucratic boundaries
- Seeing the child in the context of family and the family in the context of its surroundings, that is, holistic approaches
- Coherent and easy-to-use services
- Committed, caring, results-oriented staff
- Finding ways to adapt or circumvent traditional professional and bureaucratic limitations to meet client needs

- Professionals redefining their roles to respond to severe needs
- Overall, intensive, comprehensive, responsive, and flexible programming

Such generalizable evaluation findings about principles of effective programming have become the knowledge base of the field of evaluation research. Being knowledgeable about patterns of program effectiveness allows evaluators to provide guidance about development of new initiatives, policies, and strategies for implementation. These kinds of “lessons” constitute accumulated wisdom—principles of effectiveness or “best practices”—that can be adapted, indeed must be adapted, to specific programs, or even entire organizations.

In this vein, a special evaluation issue of *Marriage and Family Review* was devoted to “Exemplary Social Intervention Programs” (Guttman and Sussman 1995) not only looking at specific examples but also extracting cross-case patterns and principles. Such qualitative syntheses in evaluation have become increasingly important as policymakers look beyond the effectiveness of specific programs to more generic principles of effectiveness based on “high-quality lessons learned” (Patton 2002:564–566).

### Sociology and Evaluation Research

Sociology has contributed to evaluation research methodologically, through theory construction, and substantively, by informing critical questions and deepening evaluative inquiry.

Sociological areas of specialization that have made important contributions to evaluation research include the sociology of knowledge; organizational sociology, conflict theory; and areas related to special efforts at societal intervention that are the object of programming and therefore evaluation research, for example, criminology, gerontology, marriage and family studies, sociology of youth, and

community sociology. Sociologists like Edward Suchman (1967), Carol Weiss (1972, 1977), Michael Q. Patton (1978), Peter Rossi and Howard Freeman (1982) helped create the interdisciplinary field of evaluation research. Evaluation research can be viewed as a particular and specialized arena within applied sociology. As evaluation research has grown and matured into a recognized profession, it has also matured into an important arena of sociological practice.

In the future, evaluation research will be aiming to increase use beyond projects and programs as primary units of analysis to evaluating overall organizational effectiveness and the impacts of social policies, thereby having greater influence on policy (Rossi, Lipsey, and Freeman 2004; Weiss, Murphy-Graham, and Birkeland 2005) and a broader range of audiences (Baxter and Braverman 2004). The cross-cultural and global reach of evaluation will accelerate with more attention to “contextually responsive evaluation frameworks” (Thomas and Stevens 2004), training evaluators to work in culturally diverse settings (Thompson-Robinson, Hopson, and SenGupta 2004) and adapting evaluation practices and standards to international settings (Russon and Russon 2004). Attendant to these developments will be increased emphasis on getting feedback from program participants about the services they receive and using participatory evaluation processes in which both program staff and intended beneficiaries play a meaningful role in the evaluation process (Fetterman and Wandersman 2005). The emergence of evaluation research as an identifiable field of professional practice and scholarship will be solidified as evaluation knowledge is codified and disseminated (Alkin 2004; Mathison 2005) and essential evaluator competencies are crystallized (Stevahn et al. 2005). Technology and global communications will also surely influence the future of evaluation research. To keep up with these developments, some key Web sites for tracking future developments in this still emergent field of evaluation research are offered in Table 41.1.

**Table 41.1** Key Web Sites for Evaluation Research

American Evaluation Association  
*Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation* (an online-only journal)  
 Evaluation Checklists  
 International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation  
 International Development Evaluation Association  
 Archives of *EvalTalk*, the American Evaluation Association  
 Discussion List (LISTSERV 14.5)

[www.eval.org](http://www.eval.org)  
<http://evaluation.wmich.edu/jmde>  
[www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists](http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists)  
[www.internationalevaluation.com](http://www.internationalevaluation.com)  
[www.ideas-int.org](http://www.ideas-int.org)  
<http://bama.ua.edu/archives/evaltalk.html>

## SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

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Sociological practice is sociology focused on identifying and/or implementing social problem solutions, as opposed to “basic sociology,” devoted purely to formulating explanations of social phenomena.<sup>1,2</sup> Sociological practice was at the core of American sociology in the late 1800s (Fritz 1985), a time when many of the early sociologists were reformers interested in promoting social progress and intervention. What was termed “practical sociology” in the early 1900s (Barnes 1948:741) has influenced the contemporary field of sociological practice that reemerged in the 1970s that resulted from mainstream sociology shifted away from application and intervention to theory and statistical testing.

There are two areas of contemporary sociological practice—applied sociology and clinical sociology—though many practicing sociologists do work that reflects aspects of both areas. A simple way of distinguishing between applied and clinical sociology is to say that applied sociologists are research specialists and clinical sociologists are change agents or interventionists. Applied sociologists use five general research methods: problem exploration, policy analysis, needs assessment, program evaluation, and/or social impact assessment (Olsen and DeMartini 1981). As such, applied sociologists produce information that is useful in resolving problems in government, industry, and other practice settings but they are not necessarily direct change agents. Clinical sociologists use a sociological perspective to design strategies for positive social change at any level of social organization. Clinical sociologists have areas of specialization such as organizations, health and illness, forensic sociology, aging, and comparative social systems. They work as action researchers, organizational development specialists,

sociotherapists, community developers, mediators, and social policy implementers, to name a few types of work roles and settings.

Most practicing sociologists today did not receive explicit training in sociological practice during their undergraduate or graduate education. They have had to invent their own strategies for using sociology. The sociological practice journey of Steven Picou, described below, is an illustration of one sociologist’s unanticipated shift from basic sociology to sociological practice.

### A SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE JOURNEY: AN OVERVIEW

On March 24, 1989, the supertanker Exxon Valdez ran aground on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound (PWS), Alaska, releasing 42 million liters of oil into the local waters. It was the largest oil spill in U.S. history, covering more than 3,000 square miles of water and affecting more than 1,200 miles of shoreline. The Exxon Valdez oil spill (EVOS) led to the death of about 350,000 birds, between 3,500 and 5,500 sea otters, 30 harbor seals, 17 gray whales, and 14 sea lions.

As one Native Alaskan leader said, the day EVOS occurred was “the day the water died” (Picou et al. 1992). The populations of those communities contain large numbers of “subsistence economy” Native Alaskans and commercial fishermen. The lives of both groups are sustained by traditional subsistence activities that depend on the water in PWS being “alive.”

By August 19, 1989, sociology professor J. Steven Picou and his colleagues were in Cordova, Alaska, to

conduct basic research on the long-term social impacts of the spill on the rural communities of PWS. The project initially did not include a sociological practice component. What Picou did not anticipate at the time was that this project would evolve into a highly instructive sociological practice episode in terms of many of the features of sociological practice today that will be discussed in this chapter. Specifically, Picou and his colleagues would innovatively and effectively develop a participatory research, or inquiry, approach rooted in a version of symbolic interactionist theory.

To digress briefly, this chapter will suggest that the participatory inquiry approach holds promise as a model for sociological practice in the twenty-first century. In this model, the practicing sociologist participates *with* clients individually and in groups in diagnosing/solving problems rather than performing “interventions” *on* them. The goal is to form an “outsider-insider team” relationship with clients viewed as active stakeholders, a relationship in which both sociologists and clients have equally valuable knowledge. Among other reasons, it will be proposed that the timing is right for sociological practice to adopt such an approach. There is emerging, in the human service professions, a new “partnership model” that is replacing the traditional “professional dominance model” (Darling 1996, 2000). Clients of human services today increasingly expect to actively participate in the process of defining the services they receive. Therefore, it will be argued that adoption of approaches based on inquiry-focused partnerships between sociologists and clients will improve the marketability of sociological practitioners competing with other human service professionals for clients.

Picou’s EVOS project came to focus on stress. Picou’s research team documented long-term, chronic stress in the affected communities. And as time went on they effectively established strong insider-outsider bonds with many members of the affected PWS communities. Furthermore, as their bonds of trust with the communities grew strong, they worked collaboratively with these rural communities to organize a program to help the communities recover from their EVOS-induced stress. The PWS Regional Citizen’s Advisory Council agreed to sponsor them in organizing a participatory research-based program to reduce stress in the community. As a result, Picou and his colleagues worked collaboratively with the community in designing the “Growing Together Community Education Program,” the program that was shown to reduce EVOS-related stress in the community.

In this case, we see in action the five features of the participatory inquiry process that will be discussed in the chapter. Picou and his colleagues (1) were known in the community as sociologists; (2) contributed to theory about effects of technological disasters as a result of their close involvement with the community in problem-solving activity; (3) were accepted in the community because of the cooperative approach they took, in which they treated community members as equal partners; (4) were able to

mobilize the community for recovery because of the cooperative relationship they had established; and (5) became sensitive to and effectively responded to the sociopolitical situation they were operating in, probably becoming more effective practitioners because of that awareness. It is hoped that the work of pioneers such as Picou will foreshadow the day when it will be the norm for sociologists to be receptively and productively engaged, as practicing sociologists, in problem-resolving activities *with* members of the many publics of sociology.

## THE LEGACY OF THE CHICAGO SCHOOL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

The symbolic interactionist framework grew from intensive study of the social problems of Chicago. As Howard Becker (1966) says, out of detailed examination of the community context in which these problems existed, symbolic interactionism emerged to systematize and make sense of the real-life observations. The picture that emerged, and that came to be formalized in the theoretical framework called “symbolic interactionism” (Blumer 1969), is that of individual actors (including groups as well as persons) imbedded in symbolic, or interpretive, interaction with others. *Symbolic* and *interpretive* in relation to interaction refer to the fact that actors are constantly engaged in a process of mentally, or cognitively, interpreting the meaning of each others’ actions by symbolically categorizing them and acting toward others based on the meanings assigned to the others. These meanings and actions are identity based. Individual actors act toward each other based on their cognitive appraisals of their own identities in relationship to others’ identities.

From this standpoint, the social problems of the city such as homelessness or delinquency are the product of “interactional careers.” Delinquency, for example, arises from delinquent careers in a process by which individuals become delinquent through being appraised by others and through self-appraisal as “delinquent.” And, from the symbolic interactionist perspective, effective responses to the delinquency problem should be directed at changing the “shape” of delinquents’ interactional careers, at making their careers more conventional.

### Urban Ecologists and Symbolic Interactionists: Contrasting Styles of Professional Retreat from Social Reform among the Men of the Chicago School

The impulse toward sociological practice defined as social reform was widespread among American sociologists in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This was particularly true at the University of Chicago, where reform-oriented sociology centered on the work of Jane Addams at Hull House and her male and female sociological colleagues (Deegan 1986). However, reform-oriented

sociologists began to experience the “double marginality” that practicing sociologists often continue to face in some degree today. They were attacked by the business and other elites of Chicago, who perceived that their vested interests were threatened by the reforms they sought. And they were discredited by their colleagues at the University who saw them as un-academic moralists.

Major displacements of key reform-oriented sociologists occurred as mainstream sociology retreated from social reform, both in Chicago and throughout the United States. Jane Addams was snubbed both by many of her sociological colleagues and by the elites. She responded by moving into the development of the new discipline of social work. Prominent reformist members of the early Chicago School, Bemis, Zeublin, and Thomas, were all forced out of the University. By 1918 (during the Red Scare), the only representatives of the reformist early Chicago sociologists remaining were George Herbert Mead and Albion Small (Deegan 1986:314).

Chicago sociology (and American sociology, because Chicago sociology was the trend setter) was now faced with a situation of role conflict that has been summed up succinctly by Ernest Becker (1971) as a “tension between these two poles: the human urgency of the social problem on the one end and the quiet respectability of objective science on the other” (p. 6). Two groups of Chicago sociologists adapted to this situation in fundamentally different ways. On the one hand, the urban ecologists, headed by Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess, devised what can be termed a defensive strategy. Renouncing involvement in social reform, they rejected one horn of the dilemma described by Ernest Becker and embraced the other. They rejected the human urgency of social problems and embraced the quiet respectability of objective science.

On the other hand, symbolic interactionists such as George Herbert Mead and William I. Thomas built and traveled on a different road toward resolution of the double marginality of sociological practice. They did not follow the “role renunciation” pathway blazed by Park and Burgess. The symbolic interactionists’ project moves toward resolution of the “social problem versus social science” conflict through collaborative *unification* of social research and social practice. It is a project inherited from and that continues the work of Jane Addams at Hull House (Deegan 1986).

The way symbolic interactionism does this is by conceptually elaborating and theoretically and methodologically formalizing the central insight on which the Hull House approach was based. This is the insight that the retreatist approach of the outside-expert, “value free,” sociologists (such as Park, Burgess, William Ogburn, and present-day followers of this approach) won’t work as a way of effectively responding to social problems. The sociologist, as a social scientist, must enter into and become part of the community to understand and to promote change in it. The point can effectively be understood in terms of Ritzer’s (1975) designation of the symbolic interactionist perspective as the “social definition paradigm.” What this

means in light of the present discussion is that for symbolic interactionists social problems result from collective definitions of certain social situations as “problematic.” These definitions of situations can only be understood and changed “from within,” by participatively entering into and thereby understanding and then helping modify the cognitive and communicative process that lead to the collectively recognized problem. What Mead did to resolve social problems clearly shows that it is valid to view symbolic interactionism metaphorically as a staging area for participatory research approaches to social problems. Mead’s general perspective was that

conflict in society occurred when people were unable to take each others “roles.” The remedy to social problems became more open communication. “Scientific information” collected in an “objective” manner provided a mechanism to understand the issues involved in any given problem. All the participants in the dilemma could then listen to and understand the different perspectives and situations. Since people were rational beings and desired a peaceful and sociable existence, social reform girded with liberal values was the logical way to plan social change. (Deegan 1986:107)

Mead wrote that there should be an ongoing process of collaboratively developing, testing, and revising “working hypotheses” for social betterment. This was, he said, a process through which science and scientists should enter into democratic dialogue with other members of society toward the development of a more “progressive” society. In his various social reform activities in Chicago, Mead attempted to put his ideas about a collaborative process of generating, testing, and revising working hypotheses into action. One of these activities will be used for illustration here. As part of a five-year study of the needs of Chicago Stockyards District done in conjunction with the University of Chicago Settlement, Mead and his colleague Charles Henderson studied wages in the meatpacking companies.

Mead and Henderson worked collaboratively with the board of the University of Chicago Settlement and with representatives of the Armour and Swift meatpacking houses as the final report was being prepared. The Armour and Swift representatives expressed concern about the interpretation of some of the data in the draft of the final report. They were concerned that the report suggested that their wages were too low and led to poverty. Mead and Henderson, in response, agreed (with the concurrence of the board) to also include in the report data showing that Armour and Swift were paying wages that were not out of line with the industry as a whole. After meetings with the packers, Mead agreed to some further modifications in controversial paragraphs of the report that were responsive to packers’ concerns about an “unsympathetic tone toward the packers” (Deegan 1986:114). The final report, which was not objected to by the meat packers, contained a striking critique of the meat packers’ wage policies. Data were presented that showed that according to a measure devised



to calculate a “poverty level,” \$800 per year was a necessary minimum income for a family of five. In contrast, the report showed that the average family size in the district was 5.33 and that the average income was only \$634.80. It was clear from the report that, despite the implicit justification of Armour and Swift from an extensive comparison to other companies in the industry, families were able to survive only by strategies such as having mothers employed, pulling children out of school at an early age, taking in boarders, having all family members working for income, and enduring overcrowding, poverty, and ill health (p. 114).

## THEORY AND PRACTICE

Despite the early focus on practice, the discipline of sociology after World War I moved away from application and intervention and became increasingly focused on research dedicated to the development of pure theory and testing with data. As explained by Hans Mauksch, writing in the 1980s (1983),

As part of its thrust to be accepted as a pure science, sociology, similar to other disciplines, has accorded prestige, priority, and rewards to the pursuit of conceptual and theoretical issues with little regard to their application. This climate, pervasive even today, throughout many academic sociology departments—particularly at research universities—places great value on purely academic careers and labels as less worthy and somewhat tainted. (P. 2)

Members of the sociological practice community have expressed dissatisfaction with the discipline’s dominant model, as described by Mauksch, since the 1970s. They have, in fact, differed so strongly with the pure-theory-and-research model that they have formed two associations *outside* of the American Sociological Association (ASA). These are the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) and the Sociological Practice Association (SPA), which have now merged into a single organization called the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology.

## Social Engineering

More recently, among mainstream sociologists there have been increasing indications of dissatisfaction with the consequences of pursuing the pure-science model and even some increasing signs of displeasure with the model itself. In 1998, for example, Jonathan Turner authored a provocative article titled “Must Sociological Theory and Sociological Practice Be So Far Apart?” In the article, he advanced a strong appeal for greater connection between sociological theory, research, and practice, so that sociology can fulfill its mission to “make the world better.” Turner’s (1998:248) proposed strategy for bringing theory and research into closer contact with practice—social engineering—proved to be controversial. Theories supported

by research, he said, can be translated into practice if sociological practitioners develop an “engineering mentality.” Sociologists, he said, should break down theoretical principles into “rules of thumb” about how to build structures and to evaluate problems of structures.

Later, in a special issue of *Sociological Practice: A Journal of Clinical and Applied Sociology* devoted to the topic of social engineering, Turner (2001) presented a more detailed view of social engineering “rules of thumb.” He described for the practice-oriented readership of that journal rules of thumb derived from five bodies of academic theory and research: (1) people’s sense of justice and fairness, (2) people’s responses to having their expected levels of prestige and/or authority met or contradicted, (3) the impacts of group size and differentiation on the “personalness” of relations in the group, (4) the relationships between people’s dependence on others for valued resources and the power those others have over them, and (5) determinants of solidarity among people (such as frequency of face-to-face interaction, degree of status equality, opposition to external foes, etc.). Turner summed up his views on social engineering by saying,

Only if practitioners and theorists get together can Comte’s dream of positivism be realized, or more immediately, can the goal of virtually all early American sociologists become a beacon for twenty-first century sociology. . . . Social engineering—perhaps by another name but at its core a theory-driven activity—is the best approach, I believe, to making a difference in the world, one small step at a time. (P. 119)

Practitioners responding to Turner in the special issue of *Sociological Practice: A Journal of Clinical and Applied Sociology* argued that the engineering model leaves out the interactive social context in which problem solving occurs. They asserted that Comte’s dream does not recognize that effective problem solving grows “from the inside out”—from social interactions in which individuals and groups interpretively fit their lines of action together. As will be discussed in more detail below, interactionism may help correct the practitioner-identified weaknesses of the engineering model. Interactionism provides an account of the communication process through which individuals and groups interpretively formulate their definitions of and responses to problems (Sandstrom, Martin, and Fine 2003:13–14).

Melvyn Fein (2001) stated that Turner’s engineering approach fails to recognize that sociological practitioners cannot externally control events to the extent implied by the engineering metaphor. The engineering metaphor, Fein suggested, invokes the assumption that the sociological practitioner is “someone who can move social building blocks around the way one can steel girders” (p. 122). The mechanical engineer, he said, “may have to deal with the tensile strength of a metal beam, but the social interventionist must contend with other human beings who may have different goals and who are as clever as he/she in influencing events” (p. 124).

Robert Dotzler (2001) further developed the theme outlined by Fein, asserting that the “rule of thumb” approach is too removed from the social interactional context of the practitioner—client encounter. What is needed to bring theory and practice closer together, he said, is a framework that sees the practice encounter as a complex interactional event in which there are many stakeholders. In contrast to the asymmetrical relationship between theory and practice inherent in the engineering model, Dotzler argued for an alternate model. He asserted that both the theory and practice communities of sociology—and society for that matter—will benefit if the relationship between theory and practice is a two-way street, in which practice informs theory as much as vice versa. Fein (2001) also supported this reciprocal relationship in which the practitioner is a cocreator and tester of sociological theory.

### Efforts within the Sociological Practice Community

American sociological practitioners are working to institutionalize a situation in which the relationship between theory and practice is an interactive, equal-status, two-way street. In 2000, a major step toward that goal was taken by holding the Unity 2000 Meeting in Bethesda, Maryland. Unity 2000 was timed to coincide with the annual meeting of the ASA. The Unity 2000 Meeting brought together members of the two major extra-academic sociological practice organizations, the SPA and the SAS, with representatives of the ASA’s Section on Sociological Practice. Also present were members of the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology, made up of members of all three of the organizations mentioned above. The Commission’s overall mission is to develop, promote, and support quality sociological education and practice in applied and clinical areas. Jonathan Turner was the keynote speaker at the meeting, invited to present a stance that would challenge members of the sociological practice community to find a common purpose.

Melodye Lehnerer (2001), in her presidential address, identified six steps needed to further promote an interactive, equal-status relationship between theory and practice: (1) collaboration among the nonacademic wings of sociological practice community; (2) the work of the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology should be supported; (3) collaboration with the ASA Section on Sociological Practice should occur; (4) workshops promoting the viability of a practice orientation and its link to theoretical analysis should be developed; (5) the Commission’s effort to accredit sociological practice programs should be pursued aggressively, as should the SPA’s effort to encourage sociological practitioners to qualify and apply for certification as clinical sociologists. These efforts improve the visibility of sociological practice, she said. In sum, Lehnerer proposed that “we need to relish our diversity, not dismiss it, and tap into the energy generated from that diversity” (p. 154).

Since 2000, the Accreditation Task Force of the Commission on Applied and Clinical Sociology has expanded beyond its accrediting undergraduate programs and is now accrediting graduate programs in sociological practice. In August 2004, Humboldt State University’s Practicing Sociology M.A. Program became the first in the nation to achieve accreditation. In the spring of 2004, the journals of SPA and SAS were consolidated into a single journal, *Journal of Applied Sociology/Sociological Practice: A Journal of Applied and Clinical Sociology*, and in the spring of 2005, the memberships of SAS and SPA voted to consolidate into a single organization.

### TOWARD A PARTICIPATORY PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

The sociological practitioners cited above argue that a model is needed for engagement of practitioners in collaborative relationships with both nonacademic and academic groups. The need for such a model is also currently being widely discussed by sociologists outside the sociological practice community. Michael Burawoy (2005) and others call for development of a “public sociology.” In particular, the need is for a model of public sociology that allows academic sociologists to engage nonacademic publics such as media audiences, policymakers, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), silenced minorities, and leaders of social movements (see also Brady 2004; Burawoy 2003, 2004; Burawoy et al. 2004; Hausknecht 2002).

As Robert Dentler (2002:32) recently observed, the field of sociological practice today is theoretically and methodologically muddled. To a large extent, the increasing numbers of sociologists who work in practice settings are in uncharted theoretical and methodological territory. They have been taught in university programs that continue to follow William Ogburn’s 1929 advice to the discipline, be interested “in one thing only, to wit, discovering new knowledge” (Pettigrew 1980:xxii). Their training has not given them the capacity to use their sociology.

### Theory and Method in Prominent Sociological Practice Textbooks

I have reviewed the theoretical and methodological models improvised to guide sociological practice by the authors of five prominent sociological practice textbooks. The major difficulty I see with the theoretical and methodological models being used in all five of the textbooks is that they are all in some sense “interventionist.” They all tend to picture the sociological practitioner as an individual change agent, an agent who operates on a problem so as to solve the problem. Rebach and Bruhn (1991, 2001), Bruhn and Rebach (1996), and Darling (2000) explicitly use the term “intervention” to describe the role of the sociological practitioner in problem solving, while the notion is more implicit in the books by Steele, Scarisbrick-Hauser, and

Hauser (1999) and Straus (1994). In this interventionist focus, the models they are using appear to be influenced by the traditional approaches that are prevalent in service professions such as medicine and social work. But these interventionist models don't provide adequate guidance for accomplishing what the sociological practitioners and seekers of public sociology cited above are calling for: ways of achieving *collaborative engagement* of people in relationships. "Intervention" doesn't appear to be an effective way to build collaborative relationships between people.

### **Beyond Intervention: Toward Participatory Inquiry Approaches Rooted in Symbolic Interactionism**

As indicated in the historical section of this chapter, the approach that appears to be needed is one of theoretical and methodological improvisation from a sociological script that grew up at a time in the history of American sociology when the discipline was highly practice oriented: symbolic, or interpretive, interactionism (see Blumer 1969; Denzin 1989). There has been some writing about the potential utility of symbolic interactionism as a guide for social work in general as well as for specific forms of practice such as family therapy (e.g., Forte 2004a, 2004b; Hurvitz and Straus 1991; Krause 1985; Maines 1997). There has been little attention to developing an appropriate general method for applying sociology with symbolic interactionism, however. Darling's (2000) attempt to incorporate symbolic interactionism into Bruhn and Rebach's (1996) biopsychosocial systems model is an exception.

Symbolic interactionism can promote collaborative relationships between practitioners and clients through its use to guide a participatory research or inquiry-oriented approach. In participatory research, informants become active participants with sociologists in the research. The approach is one in which sociologists and clients become collaborators: co-problem assessors and co-problem solvers.

There is great variety in the participatory inquiry approaches that practicing sociologists have devised. The approaches range from those where sociologists work with formal committees of stakeholders in local organizations, communities, and larger organized bodies to those where sociologists work informally with families or individuals to collaboratively develop and test problem-solving hypotheses.

Whyte, Greenwood, and Lazes's (1991) participatory action research (PAR) project with Xerox Corporation is an example of a participatory research approach to practicing sociology in a large organization. The practicing sociologists successfully worked with a formal stakeholders' committee on the problem of how to save \$3.2 million and retain 180 jobs. A more detailed discussion of PAR is provided below.

Simmons's (1994) use of grounded therapy is an example of a participatory research approach to practicing sociology with individuals. Working informally with the

individual client as a coresearcher, Simmons constructs a preconception-free grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) of the therapy client's self-defined problem and a plan of therapeutic action for the client. Simmons and Gregory (2003) have more recently developed a generic practice approach rooted in grounded theory methodology that they call "grounded action" which generalizes the strategy used by Simmons in therapy to collaborative inquiry with stakeholders in any specific context focusing on any specific issue. Among the specific contexts and issues Simmons and Gregory discuss to illustrate grounded action are schools with a focus on problems related to bussing to achieve racial balance and hospitals with a focus on high turnover of nurses.

Yet another interactionism-based approach to sociological practice that qualifies as participatory inquiry is Nathan Hurvitz's approach to family therapy (Hurvitz and Straus 1991; Krause 1985). Hurvitz's symbolic interactionist family therapy revolved around helping family members form healthy "interaction hypotheses." Acting as a "mediator" and a "significant other" he encouraged family members to adopt an inquiry perspective, forming hypotheses about the causes of each other's actions. He encouraged family members to adopt "instrumental" hypotheses (those with problem-solving value) as opposed to "terminal" hypotheses (those that perpetuate the problem).

### **Five Features of the Approach**

Five beneficial consequences of using the inquiry-based interactionist approach may be identified. These may be seen as ways in which the participatory inquiry approach facilitates the bridging the academic—real-world divide and bringing theory and practice closer together. These are (1) ways this approach reduces the experience of "identity abandonment" among sociological practitioners, (2) ways the quality of theories in sociology will potentially be improved by the approach, (3) changes in society that may increase receptivity to this kind of sociological practice, (4) ways in which the dynamics of the social situation created by using this approach are conducive to producing social change, and (5) implications and consequences of the fact that the participatory approach exposes practitioners to the sociopolitics surrounding the problems in which they are trying to intervene.

### **Reduction of Identity Abandonment**

The first aspect of the approach is that sociologists don't have to go through the common experience of "identity abandonment" when they enter practice. This is the tendency among sociologists in practice settings to describe themselves using occupational titles other than "sociologist" (such as "evaluator," "social worker," "workshop consultant," etc.). They do so because the prevailing view outside the academy is either one of ignorance or that sociologists have nothing practical to offer, since they only

engage in the pursuit of “pure” knowledge (i.e., knowledge with no immediate practical use).

I believe that practicing sociologists who adopt the participatory research-based interactionist approach will be less shy about embracing the label “sociologist.” They will be able to identify with their academic roots and demonstrate the usefulness of those roots as they establish research partnerships with clients. The interactionist practitioner has received the academic sociological training in theory and research methods but transitions into applying them with a participatory approach. Hopefully her or his transition is facilitated by a training program in an accredited practicing sociology program, designed around the assumption that discovering knowledge and making the world a better place are compatible pursuits.

### Improving the Quality of Theories

The second aspect of sociological practice and participatory research that is guided by interactionist theory is that it has the potential to contribute to integrated sociological theory. If focused and supported by a consortium of associations, increasingly integrated theories may be created as part of the work of doing sociology. Middle-range theories summarizing principles of social structures, societal development and change, and microsocial features of group behavior and interpersonal relations can be formulated to serve as guidelines for the knowledge base of practice. Branches could build outward from each of these two trunks, each providing statements of key concepts in each of the main domains of practice. Theorists could occupy themselves fruitfully as well by keeping up with the flow of applied and clinical literature, extracting the most promising and prospectively generic ideas and assumptions that undergird the findings from and challenges facing practitioners. These men and women would be drawn from both the sociologist and practitioner “sides” of participatory research partnerships (see Dentler 1995:11–12).

### Societal Acceptance of Sociological Practice

Acceptance of this partnership approach to practice allows a focus to develop on collaborative, problem-oriented inquiry that is consistent with the public and private sectors. As Rosalyn Benjamin Darling (1996, 2000) observed, “Human services today are increasingly coming to be based on a ‘partnership’ model in which service users and service providers have equal status. This model is replacing the ‘professional dominance’ model that prevailed in the past” (1996:135).

According to Darling, there is a more widespread adoption of the new partnership model among service users than among service providers. Joyce Miller Iutovich and Mark Iutovich (1987) have argued that sociological practice as a field needs to become entrepreneurial in order to grow. These analysts state we must be mobilized and ready to respond as a professional community to opportunities

that present themselves. Based on the trends noted by Darling, forming partnerships between sociologists and clients focused on collaborative, problem-oriented inquiry may be the entrepreneurial thing to do for growing the sociological practice profession.

### Producing Social Change

Theory and research in social psychology point to the particular effectiveness of the method of sociologists and clients acting together as equals to solve common problems. There are three especially important social psychological factors among numerous others that operate to create collective buy-in in this situation: (1) the presence superordinate goals that create a sense of interdependence among the participants; (2) equality of social status among the participants, which gives each a sense of valued contribution to the group; and (3) a shared sense of freedom from constraint among participants, which reduces their resistance to the forward flow of collective activity (Fisher 1982; Stephan and Stephan 1990). The approach is focused on supporting development of competent action plans and scenarios that the participants buy into based on interdependence in the pursuit of superordinate goals, status equality among the participants, and the perception among participants that their actions are voluntary and not externally constrained or coerced.

### Sociopolitical Contexts

The fifth feature of the participatory inquiry approach to practicing sociology might be termed sociopolitical. All practicing sociologists are closer to and more affected by the sociopolitical interplay of multiple participants on various “sides” of the problems and social issues they address. But users of the participatory research approach have what might be called a more competently adaptive understanding of the multiple standpoints and perspectives of people making up the structure of an organization, community, family, or other social wholes than are both traditional academic sociologists and other practicing sociologists.

Of course, participative contact with members located at different vantage points in a social setting has its risks. This is especially the case when there are no efforts to link stakeholder groups into more unified action sets that include the sociologist, or when such efforts are ineffective. Howard Becker (1967), in an article titled, “Whose Side Are We On?,” explains two related kinds of risks for sociologists generally, which I believe are particular risks for practicing sociologists. However, practicing sociologists who effectively use the participatory research approach will reduce these risks considerably. He says the risks are greatest where groups have defined their relationships with each other in politicized, adversarial terms. Especially in such situations, the sociologist will tend to *become biased* and/or *be accused of bias*. Bias means falling into sympathy with one side in a many-sided situation and, as a result, sociologically buying into and telling that side’s story while

neglecting or distorting the perspectives of the other stakeholders in a situation. Since in participatory inquiry the chances of adversarial relations are reduced, so will the tendency to a biased and/or labeled as such.

## AN OUTLINE FOR AN INQUIRY-FOCUSED PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO PRACTICING SOCIOLOGY

### Participatory Relationship

The first step toward practicing sociology is to effectively resolve the role conflict identified by Ernest Becker that was discussed above. What Martin Buber called an “I-it” relationship with those studied must be replaced with an “I-thou” or participatory relationship. The practicing sociologist departs from the view that says that truth and science follows asymmetrically from the social scientist to the community and society. Rather, the sociologist cultivates a relationship with members of the social wholes where practice occurs, a relationship in which both sociologist and members value each other’s knowledge. We need to cultivate what Mead was beginning to define: a relationship between a practicing sociologist and a member in which *action change* is the mutual goal.

### Changing What People Do

A number of specific models of action-focused participatory inquiry have spawned since Mead’s pioneering work. Among these are community and organizational action research (Lewin 1946), action science (Argyris, Putnam, and Smith 1985), and program-evaluation techniques such as evaluability assessment (Smith 1989) and participatory evaluation (Cousins 1996). But the best-known contributor in this area is a sociologist, William F. Whyte, whose work is important for understanding the development of the bridge between social science and sociological practice originating in the Chicago School. He received his doctorate from the University of Chicago Sociology Department in the early 1940s, after receiving his initial research training at Harvard from 1936 to 1940.

Whyte (1984) said that at Harvard he “was conditioned to believe that if research was to be truly scientific, researchers’ values must be set aside” (p. 19). Beginning with his experience in the Chicago sociology program, however, he has increasingly abandoned the idea that there must be a strict separation between scientific research and action projects. In a statement showing that he began working on the same bridge between science and social betterment that Mead envisioned, he says he “began exploring how research can be integrated with action in ways that will advance science and enhance human progress at the same time” (p. 20).

Whyte, Greenwood, and Lazee’s (1997) approach to practicing sociology has come to be termed PAR, defined as follows:

In participatory action research (PAR), some of the people in the organization or community under study participate actively with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of action implications. (P. 111)

“To bring in the *values* I see in PAR,” Whyte added the following sentence to the definition: “The social purpose underlying PAR is to empower low status people in the organization or community to make decisions and take actions which were previously foreclosed to them” (p. 112).

A well-known example of PAR took place after the Xerox management proposed to “outsource” much of the work being done by union members because of cost overruns. A consultant working with Whyte’s guidance suggested to union and management leaders that they form a “cost study team” (CST). The CST would study ways to save money and jobs, thus making compatible the perspectives, and vested interests, of both stakeholder groups. The CST worked creatively for six months to find ways of doing the work less expensively at Xerox than through outsourcing. Ultimately, 180 jobs and \$3.2 million were saved (Whyte et al. 1991).

Two important aspects of Whyte’s approach to promoting action change within the PAR format should be noted. The first is that he does not see it as a method of promoting action change through “intervention.” Rather, it is a way of facilitating problem-responsive action through creation, identification, and/or dissemination of *social inventions*. Interventions cause change through imposition from outside the members’ social world. Social inventions promote motivated change: changed actions because members of social worlds can *see* that the changes allow effective resolution of their own problematic situations—problems with which they have been grappling.

The second important aspect of Whyte’s PAR version of the problem-solving partnership approach to practicing sociology is that it focuses on promoting change in actions that should be seen as occurring within *sociotechnical systems*. Whyte (see Whyte et al. 1997) says that he has come to see, based on his extensive work as a practicing sociologist in work organizations, that “the factory is not only a social system but also a technical system, consisting of the technologies and tools and work procedures required to reach the organization’s objectives” (p. 57). This is a point with enormous implications for the practicing sociologist, because it means that, since the two systems are interdependent, “a change in the technical system necessarily impacts on the functioning of the social system, and a change in the social system has impacts on the technical system” (p. 57). Though Whyte only speaks about work organizations to illustrate his points, it seems to us that all social structures, ranging from microstructures such as families to macrostructures such as nation-states can be viewed as sociotechnical systems. Practicing sociologists can profitably consider ways in which any given targeted action change might be prompted via sociotechnical strategies.

## Changing the Definition of the Situation

Promoting action change cannot occur in a vacuum. The sociocognitive framework that gives action meaning and within which action occurs must also be attended to by the practicing sociologist. This collectively generated cognitive framework that gives coherence and direction to action was called the “definition of the situation” by W. I. Thomas (1928). The “definition of the situation” is really a collectively shared mental process of defining the situation (McHugh 1967) that exists in constant dynamic interplay with the collectively shared overt process of “act construction” (Blumer 1969). Social actors are in a continuous, dynamic process of defining and redefining to themselves and others “what is going on here” and constructing and reconstructing actions toward each other that correspond to the definitions. The “Thomas theorem” says that situations defined as real will have real consequences because people act on their definitions of what is “really” going on in the situation.

Roger Straus (1984) has proposed that the field of sociological practice focus its efforts on developing strategies for changing the definition of the situation. Straus says that there are four “levels” of social actors, ranging from more microlevel to more macrolevel actors: persons, groups, organizations, and social worlds. Persons interact within groups, organizations, and social worlds and these latter entities may also be considered actors and interactors in their own right. Families, organizations, and social worlds also act and interact. Straus proposes strategies that can be used by practicing sociologists to change the definitions of situations that guide the actions and interactions of these varying levels of actors. He proposes direct, indirect, and cooperative approaches that are focused on encouraging redefinition of “who we are” and “what is happening here.”

Lack of the capacity or readiness to act collectively is the master definitional problem that we are confronted with in our postmodern era. It may be termed a “community problem” (see Bellah et al. 1996; Putnam 1995, 2001). Communal, which is to say mutually affirming, cooperative, social bonds are too much in a state of disrepair or rupture. Both within and between the groups, organizations, and social worlds in which we participate, we define ourselves too much as isolated and externally controlled. Individuals and groups see themselves as engaged in win-lose struggles against one another for scarce opportunities for material resources and social advancement. The specific “action problems” recognized in contemporary society (such as substance abuse, family violence, gang-related violent crime, poverty, racism, and war) can be seen as developing subsequent to, and partially as a consequence of, this definitional community problem. They represent defensive adaptational responses developing out of situations in which actors at these varying levels of social action define themselves as “disconnected,” “disempowered,” “degraded,” or “losing.”

As practicing sociologists, then, a first order of business is promotion of collaborative, communal definitions of situations among the social actors with whom we work. Such definitions of the situation promote readiness to act in ways that effectively respond to the myriad specific action problems confronting them. Depending on the level of social interaction where we work, our efforts in this regard should be dedicated to promoting social bonds both within and between groups. Philip Nyden’s work in Chicago as Director of the Center for Urban Research and Learning and with the Policy Research and Action Group illustrates the use of participatory research to build communal bonds within and between groups in the Chicago area (Nyden et al. 1997). In a variety of projects, university-based researchers (students as well as faculty) have worked in research partnerships with members of local organizations in developing innovative solutions to pressing urban issues. As a result, ethnically and economically diverse (often disadvantaged) groups have experienced empowerment in addressing issues such as services to the homeless, neighborhood revitalization, environmental racism, and myriad other issues.

## Insider/Outsider Teams

An important social invention in the participatory inquiry approach to practicing sociology for promoting collaborative definitions of situations as well as problem-responsive actions is insider/outsider (I/O) research teams. I believe use of such teams will also help insulate practicing sociologists from the more punishing, marginality-producing sociopolitical dynamics of their work situations. These teams were essentially envisioned by the Hull House sociologists and by Mead as integral to the “working hypothesis” process and by Whyte and colleagues when they formed the CST at Xerox. However, they were named and analyzed by organizational development researchers Bartunek and Louis (1996).

The basic idea is that forming bonds of partnership between researchers and practitioners in I/O research teams can promote both a collaborative definition of the situation and action readiness among all the stakeholder groups present in the team. Bartunek and Louis (1996) note that both the outsider sociologist and the insider actor hold perspectives that are “situated,” that is, ethnocentric or biased. And, both perspectives are needed for effective problem solving. Bringing both of these perspectives together is clearly the goal of our inquiry partnership approach to practicing sociology. As noted, though, there are also sociopolitical dynamics in the working situation of practicing sociologists that make this difficult to accomplish, especially all at once and without guidance. Based on their review of the issues from the literature as well as on their own study of “the faculty development committee,” Bartunek and Louis have identified stages in the development of I/O research teams that practicing sociologists can follow in a step-by-step fashion to overcome these difficulties.

Bartunek and Louis concluded that the most important yield of I/O research teams is a kind of positive marginality. This positive marginality contrasts with the punishing double marginality sometimes encountered by practicing sociologists who operate outside the context of an I/O team. This positive marginality is a marginality based on mutual interdependence and mutual respect that promotes effective problem solving. Bartunek and Louis (1996) wrote,

In insider/outsider pairings, the outsider's assumptions, language and cognitive frames are made explicit in the insider's questions and vice-versa. The parties, in a colloquial sense, keep each other honest—or at least more conscious than a single party alone may easily achieve. (P. 62)

## **SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

I have described above how sociology experienced sociopolitical marginality at the turn of the twentieth century when sociologists were actively engaged in social reform. The discipline adapted defensively to their role-set problems, by retreating from reform into the active scientific pursuit of new knowledge. Ultimately, the field of practicing sociology, using tools fashioned out of the collaborative inquiry approach and spearheaded by the practicing sociology consortium of professional associations,

may contribute to leading mainstream sociology out of its long-standing defensive retreatism and back to an activist community role. Anticipating this development, Dotzler (2001) wrote at the turn of the century that

for sociology in the twenty-first century to flourish, it must institutionalize a strong, independent, professional practitioner cadre, i.e., individuals trained as sociologists situated outside the conventional academic milieu performing tasks that facilitate the use of sociological knowledge in decision-making situations. These practitioners must view themselves not only as “users” of the store of sociological knowledge, but as co-creators. These practitioners must distinguish themselves from their academic cousins by focusing on the processes by which knowledge comes into use. Also, they must define the special role practitioners have in providing substantive feedback to theorists on the fitness of their theories for use—a form of theory testing. Further, status equality between academic-based and practice-based sociologists must be established. (P. 134)

In the twenty-first century, we can anticipate that sociology as a whole will be able to come out of its academic closet and into practicing sociology in a work situation where such change-oriented practice is welcomed. This future situation envisioned by Dotzler may be more likely to come into being if inquiry-focused participatory problem solving informed by interactionist theory is widely adopted in the field of sociological practice.

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## TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIOLOGY

### *Past, Present, and Future*

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This chapter offers an overview of the state of teaching and learning in sociology and, given space limitations, focuses on this topic in the United States—that is, we look at the “passing on” (Goldsmid and Wilson 1980) of the discipline, including content knowledge, skills, and values. The chapter also synthesizes knowledge about a domain of scholarship—the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in sociology. The emergence of the SoTL label and specialty sprang from the work of Carnegie Foundation President Ernest Boyer and his book *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer 1990). SoTL in our discipline is reflection and research on teaching and learning, conducted by sociologists about their classes and students, and made public. SoTL is an international movement both within and outside sociology and is linked to our teaching and learning practices. As we will document, the discipline of sociology is highly congruent with SoTL because much of our basic research can inform research on teaching and learning.

In this chapter, then, we summarize the following: (1) the recent history of teaching, learning, and SoTL in the discipline, (2) the current position of, knowledge about, and research on teaching and learning in sociology, and (3) ideas about paths for the future of teaching, learning, and SoTL in our field.

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### THE PAST

The history of the American Sociological Association (ASA) and its attention to teaching show intertwined, evolving patterns. Around 1970, the association was undergoing a transformation to a larger, less-elite organization. Most disciplinary associations traditionally function as societies of knowledge producers; the well-being of the discipline generally takes precedence over its application. In the 1970s, the Executive Office functioned like a secretariat—collecting dues, offering an annual meeting, publishing several journals, and maintaining the governance system to support this work. There was little programmatic work, including sparse attention to teaching and sociological practice. Elected leaders were primarily from Ph.D.-granting institutions.

Shifts in ASA to become more programmatic and to have initiatives centered on teaching did not always meet with enthusiasm. As with any change in function and power, some parties push back, advocating the merits of the status quo. In their article “The Transformation of the American Sociological Association,” Simpson and Simpson (1994) describe the evolution of that association from a learned society to a professional association:



Since the 1950s, the American Sociological Association (ASA) has expanded its activities beyond its original disciplinary focus. It has taken more interest in non-disciplinary activities and has expended effort and resources on them. It has become not just a body of scholar/researchers, but increasingly a professional association. (P. 259)

In describing new emphases on applied or nonacademic positions and on formal ways to improve teaching and political activities, they conclude by saying the following:

These actions embody cherished democratic values, but as organizational goals and actions they have blurred the disciplinary focus of the ASA. They have structurally differentiated ASA's disciplinary functions from its professional and adaptive activities, and the different functions now compete for resources. The changes have diluted the control of the association by disciplinary elites and have channeled ASA resources into activities that do not advance the discipline. (P. 259)

The authors document the shift via an analysis of budget expenditures and election results. They also argue that the evolution is problematic, as the last sentence of the above quotation makes clear.

### **The ASA Projects on Teaching Undergraduate Sociology and Teaching as a Social Movement**

Hans O. Mauksch was a distinguished medical sociologist who spent much of his career at the University of Missouri and served as ASA's Executive Officer during 1975 to 1977. Drawing on his experience in the initial and ongoing training of physicians, Mauksch became fascinated that Ph.D.s in liberal arts disciplines had no training in "the practice" of their discipline—that is, serving as a college faculty member. He used the concepts and insights of sociology to frame the problem. College faculty members were professionally isolated and relatively invisible to the profession. Teaching was seen as a mysterious set of skills or traits. Faculty either "had it" or not, and there was not much to do to help teachers analyze strengths and weaknesses and improve. In short, Mauksch posited that teaching was seen as an "ascribed" characteristic, where research talent was seen as "achieved."

In the mid-1970s, the formal initiative on teaching—called the ASA Projects on Teaching Undergraduate Sociology—was launched with funding from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE) and the Lilly Foundation. The projects were directed at undergraduate education and the faculty (and future faculty) who taught undergraduate students, and set forth three substantive foci: the content we teach, the training we need to teach effectively, and the contexts in which we teach. A task group for each focus worked mightily to produce materials and offer workshops. The projects, which were absorbed into the ASA Executive Office after the funding ended, catalyzed teachers as an interest group

within the ASA and laid the foundation for scholarly work on teaching.

Mauksch intended to create a social movement (Mauksch and Howery 1986) that would elevate the professional legitimacy of teaching and reduce the isolation of teachers. He understood the leverage that the national disciplinary association could bring to this agenda, and he pushed ASA to develop and distribute teaching resources, to offer professional development and, by doing so, to provide legitimacy for teaching-related work (Mauksch 1986):

In the teaching/research/service triumvirate, teaching has the least opportunity to harness cosmopolitan symbols as support systems or as power bases. Except for the rare instances when teaching is linked to a funded project, neither economic nor professional national systems can be mobilized to support the teacher, whose activities are essentially limited to the confines of the institution and whose actual productivity is witnessed only by those clients who have neither permanence nor power—i.e., the students. (P. 41)

In a classic article, Paul Baker (1986:55) lays out the contrast between the cultures of research and teaching. He notes that all the Mertonian (Merton 1973) virtues of science, including universalism, communism, disinterestedness, and organized skepticism, reside on the research side, in contrast to the mysterious, unexamined personalism of teaching. Therefore, teaching and contributions to teaching remain less visible and largely "local." This professional work is less subject to rigorous peer review and thus less subject to acclaim. As a result, teaching accomplishments remain private and are hardly portable credentials.

Only when teaching became visible could its faculty practitioners and their products be subject to peer review, professional assessment, and appropriate professional acclaim. The "social movement" paradigm included conscious efforts to influence institutional and disciplinary reward systems. Again, this work preceded Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* and that call for a broadened definition of scholarly work to include the scholarship of teaching. The "movement" also had a goal to reduce the isolation and increase the professional visibility of undergraduate faculty, particularly those who were in small departments and had few opportunities to attend professional meetings. In short, Mauksch was prescient about the argument Carnegie Foundation President Lee Shulman (1993) would invoke: "making teaching community property."

### **Using Sociology to Explain Teaching Sociology**

Mauksch felt that sociology had a special opportunity to examine and improve its teaching practice because the subject itself held so much promise in understanding teaching. As early as 1980, Baker also called on sociology colleagues to use the theory and methods of our discipline

to study teaching and learning practices. For example, theory about small groups is used to improve teaching and learning in the classroom (Billson and Mancini 1986). Our knowledge of the professions and professional socialization can help us better prepare graduate students (Keith and Moore 1995). The seminal work on locals and cosmopolitans (Gouldner 1957) shed light on why small-college faculty careers take shapes different from those of their colleagues at research universities, as discussed by Baker and Zey-Ferrell (1984) and Howery (1998). Coser's (1974) work on greedy institutions could be readily applied to small-college environments and the expectations they place on faculty members.

In 1980, Charles Goldsmid and Everett Wilson wrote a book called *Passing on Sociology*, a book that shared insights and techniques for effective teaching using the concepts and insights of sociology. While the instructional challenges of any field are not unique, each discipline has issues that are more pronounced. In sociology, for example, we wrestle with teaching about controversial subjects or using quantitative information about human subjects. In what Shulman (1989) later would call "pedagogy of substance," sociology began to develop materials *of* the field and *for* the field.

Over time, sociologists began to do research on teaching and to share their research on teaching. Many developed areas of expertise in specific types of teaching and learning practice. This foundational work led to the formation of the Department Resources Group, a network of ASA consultants on teaching, and, more generally, a cadre of people contributing to SoTL. Thus, for about four decades, and long before the label of SoTL, sociologists have been authors on topics related to teaching sociology. Examples include discussions about teaching sociologists to teach (e.g., Dorn 1975), faculty orientations toward teaching and the implications of holding those perspectives (Baker and Zey-Ferrell 1984), analyses of barriers to and solutions for excellence in sociology undergraduate education (Campbell, Blalock, and McGee 1985), and the role of instructor characteristics in teaching sociology (e.g., Gerschick 1999; Williams et al. 1999).

In *Teaching Sociology*, sociologists have offered numerous articles and notes on specific teaching tips and discussions of a variety of teaching issues. Past work in sociology has also included program assessment strategies, discussions of curricular issues or of important learning outcomes, and studies of the "impact" of a specific assignment or teaching strategy in a specific course. In 2000, ASA partnered with the American Association of Higher Education and the Carnegie Foundation to bring together about 40 sociologists from around the nation to discuss and develop position papers on the status of knowledge and research on teaching and learning in the discipline. It was an occasion where it was evident that SoTL was an active, engaging scholarly specialty within the field of sociology.

## **Institutionalizing ASA's Commitment to Teaching and Learning**

The impact of the ASA's work on teaching increased with collaborative projects with higher-education disciplinary associations, particularly the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the American Association for Higher Education, and the Council of Graduate Schools. Projects on service learning, the content of the major, contributions of sociology to general education, assessment, and preparing future faculty all drew on collaborative work with other fields.

ASA also applied for and received grants to improve teaching. The Minority Opportunities through School Transformation project, funded by the Ford Foundation, worked with 18 departments to improve climate, curriculum, research training, mentoring, and pipeline issues for minority and majority students. The Integrating Data Analysis Project, funded by the National Science Foundation, also worked with 12 departments to infuse research training in the lower-division curriculum. The department-focus of both projects showed the sociological understanding of what collective effort is required to make real change in curricula. Both projects serve as models for other disciplines.

All social movements seek to have their goals institutionalized in the formal organization they set about to establish or change. Simpson and Simpson (1994) correctly noted the changes within the ASA toward a more professional association and away from a learned society alone. The ASA has had an active teaching movement for about three decades that is now anchored within the association's structure and budget. Numerous teaching and learning initiatives have become permanent features of the association.

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## **THE PRESENT**

There are a variety of ways—and sources of information on which to draw—to assess and summarize the current state of teaching, learning, and SoTL in sociology. We draw on a listing of topics, discussions, or research in both the last few Hans Mauksch Contributions to Undergraduate Education award recipient presentations and the seven SoTL research projects by Carnegie Scholars studying sociology, recent content of *Teaching Sociology* (TS), other published work, the 2004 ASA task force report on the undergraduate major, programs from regional meetings, and our observations and reflections as two sociologists long active in the area of teaching and learning in our discipline.

Our discussion includes examples or summaries of findings on the practice of teaching and learning in our discipline, types of work and topics related to scholarly teaching in sociology, the status of SoTL work in sociology, recommended policies or best practices for teaching and

learning in sociology, and the current place of teaching and learning in institutions and disciplinary organizations.

### Sample Findings on the Practice of Teaching and Learning in Our Discipline

Little systematic, empirical research exists on the actual teaching practices of sociologists with sociology students other than many reports by individual faculty members on their use of a specific assignment or technique. Information on pedagogical methods in "Introduction to Sociology" classes comes from Howard and Zoeller (2003), who gathered data from students in 15 sections on two campuses. The following percentages of students reported these techniques were used by their instructor often or very often: lectures (99 percent); class discussions (79 percent); films/videos (52 percent); writing assignments (44 percent); small-group activities (41 percent); student presentations (12 percent); and online discussions (11 percent). More directly relevant, Grauerholz (2005a) reports that the following types of pedagogies are used in sociology courses, based on a content analysis of 401 syllabi: readings (99 percent of syllabi), writing (94 percent), discussions/presentations (80 percent), exams (72 percent), and active learning (55 percent). Much less often indicated in these syllabi are Web-based pedagogies (10 percent), cooperative learning (3 percent), and service learning (3 percent).

Sweet (1998), in an effort to study the teaching practices of sociology instructors writing about radical pedagogy or curriculum in TS, concludes that "in examining pedagogical approaches advocated in *Teaching Sociology*, it appears that professors are comfortable in cultivating dialogue, but only a minority surrender power to students, abandon traditional grading practices, and couple classroom activities with social activism" (p. 109). Wagenaar (1993a) compared sociology majors with those in other majors on 14 items tapping learning experiences related to study in depth. He summarizes that

sociology majors experience less study in depth than do other majors. Sociology majors do, however, perceive greater intellectual connections than do other majors, and sociology majors experience greater connections with personally significant questions and more exploration of values and ethics. (P. 352)

Similarly, there are data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that allow some comparisons by disciplinary groupings in the frequency with which students engage in deep-learning behaviors (Laird, Shoup, and Kuh 2005). Deep learning consists of higher-order thinking, integrative learning, and reflective learning, each of which is made up of several NSSE behavioral items. These authors found that seniors majoring in the social sciences have the highest average score of nine disciplinary groups on the deep-learning scale even after controlling for student characteristics and institutional factors.

Disciplinary differences have also been studied in terms of faculty teaching goals. For example, Cross (1993) reports on a study of 2,800 instructors using the Teaching Goals Inventory (TGI). Teachers in the social sciences, English, and the humanities were most likely, compared with other disciplinary groups, to perceive their role as helping students develop higher-order thinking skills. Of course, such studies of goals do not tell us about actual teaching practices or practices specifically with sociology students.

Another method employed to answer the question of what we know about the practice of teaching and learning in sociology now is to ask students how they best learn the discipline. McKinney (2005) asked 114 sociology seniors at a medium-sized, public institution for "one specific strategy you use that best helps you learn sociology" and "In trying to learn the sociological imagination or sociological perspectives during your career as a sociology student, what most helped you to learn these ideas?" The most common responses were the following: (1) using real-life examples and/or applying concepts, (2) using read-write-review-repeat types of study strategies, (3) always reading materials and doing assignments, (4) having a good class or professor, and (5) having the ideas repeated, integrated, or reinforced in a course or in multiple courses.

This quantitative work is complemented by qualitative work with several groups of sociology majors, indicating that students report the need for five types of connections to plug them into learning sociology (McKinney, forthcoming): (1) *to the discipline* via student engagement and interest in sociology; (2) *to others* via collaboration, forming relationships, and having various relevant interactions especially with faculty and peers; (3) *among related ideas or skills* via strategies of review, repetition, and rewriting; (4) *to student lives and the real world* via active tasks and experiences in and out of class involving application, relevance, and reflection; and (5) *across courses* via integration of courses, retention of learned skills and materials, and reflection.

Research on the correlates of or perceptions of success or achievement on one or more assignments in particular sociology course/courses can also be noted. These qualitative and quantitative studies most often use student reaction data, but some involve the use of direct measures of learning. In the following, we offer a few diverse, current examples.

Althaus and Darnall (2001) investigated the impact of Web-based peer review of student work in an upper-division course on work. They found that the quality of the peer reviews did significantly relate to the quality of the revised essays and that the students who participated in group work wrote better peer reviews. The use of cognitive mapping is discussed in a research note by Trepagnier (2002). She uses a qualitative method called sense making that relies on the students' views of the value of cognitive mapping. She found that almost all the students indicate

that cognitive mapping helped them understand the concepts and almost half felt strongly that the mapping assignment was useful. In an article on incorporating service learning into a research methods course, Potter, Caffrey, and Plante (2003) argue that, based on informal assessments, students had better attendance and participation in this course than others in the department and gained in their knowledge of specific substantive topics related to the service learning research project. Persell (2004) reports on a study of Web-based discussions in a senior seminar on race and education. She found that use of the Web for structured discussions with peers is correlated with greater interdependency, engagement, and complex thinking. Finally, Johnson (2005) looks at student reactions to a five-step process used in teaching about social problems that attempts to empower students to help solve the problems. He indicates that students felt the course did motivate and encourage social action and responsibility and that two of the five teaching steps were especially useful.

A handful of studies over the last two decades look at learning or achievement overall in lower-division sociology classes, usually "Introduction to Sociology." Szafran (1986) and Neuman (1989) studied factors influencing the final grade in the introductory course. They found that grade point average (GPA) and pretest score significantly relate to the course grade. Neuman (1989) also reports that "students learn more if they enter the course knowing less, have a higher GPA, and studied a foreign language" (p. 25). Dietz (2002) defined success in the large introductory sociology course as total points earned. Factors significantly and positively related to total points included attendance and reading the required materials. More recently, Howard (2005) studied seven semesters of students in "Introduction to Sociology" and assessed correlates of course grade. He found class attendance, working fewer hours for pay, reading the assignments, and taking the practice exams to be significantly related to course grade. Thus, these studies in lower-level sociology classes support basic tips for learning that appear intuitive and have been suggested for learning in higher education in general.

Finally, McKinney's (2005) study of two cohorts of senior sociology majors at one institution measured success in multiple ways, including sociology GPA, expected senior thesis grade, engagement in the discipline, score on a question about the sociological imagination, and a combined measure. Preliminary analyses indicate that the self-reported frequencies of the following seven study or academic behaviors were each positively correlated with three or more of these success measures: assisting a faculty member on research, discussing course materials with others outside class, participating in a campus organization, tutoring another student, completing all required homework on time, serving as an undergraduate teaching assistant, and participating in sociology club—all connections via others, involvement, and time on task. In addition, the attitudinal factors of greater confidence for learning sociology and making more internal attributions for

success in sociology were each positively related to three or more measures of success in the discipline.

Sociologists should also be curious about the role of background or status factors in learning sociology. Although there are many articles in TS on teaching about race, class, gender, inequality, and stratification as well as several articles in the October 2003 issue on teaching at historically black colleges and universities, it appears there is very limited empirical evidence on the relationships between such factors and general learning or success in sociology. At least two reasons can be identified for this lack of evidence: (1) SoTL work is often qualitative and/or classroom based, frequently with small *N*s or lack of variance on these factors and (2) work in the sociology of education is often at the K–12 level and/or on macro, institutional issues.

Eckstein, Schoenike, and Delaney (1995), in a study at a small Catholic college, found that students from families in the lower social classes and with lower incomes were more successful at understanding the sociological imagination. And while Szafran (1986) reports students from higher social classes scored higher on a sociology pretest, Neuman (1989) found that family education and income have only an indirect effect on learning through their relationship to studying a foreign language, vocabulary, and mathematical ability. In addition, McKinney (2005) found age to be negatively related to both expected senior thesis grade and self-reported level of engagement in sociology. Minority students also were less successful than Caucasian students as measured by sociology GPA, level of engagement, and a multi-item measure of success in the major, but race was not a significant factor in multivariate analyses.

Finally, discipline curriculum or program assessment has been an area of recent, published work related to the practice of teaching and learning (e.g., Hartmann 1992; Moore 2002; Wagenaar 2002, 2004; Weiss et al. 2002). Such work focuses on learning and other outcomes at the aggregate level of the major or program. Although most of these publications on assessment discuss only strategies for conducting program assessment, one exception is that of Cappell and Kamens (2002), who used a quasi-experiment to assess the value of a particular curriculum with primarily sociology majors. They report that, after controlling for GPA, students who have "completed a spiral curriculum culminating in a capstone course . . . outperformed other students who have not yet completed the sociology curriculum" (p. 486). Furthermore, because the students are very close in age and number of semesters in school, they argue this is likely not a maturation effect.

In summary, some indications exist that encouraging deep learning and critical thinking are especially important to sociology instructors. In addition, limited work on teaching-learning practices, or variables associated with learning or success in a course or in the major highlight the importance of several factors. These include learner-centered approaches, active learning, the value of relevance

and involvement, and the importance of basic good study behaviors such as attending class and course preparation. Very limited evidence exists relating to the possible role demographic factors such as age, race, and socioeconomic status and attitudinal factors such as attributions and confidence play in learning or success in the discipline.

### Types and Topics of Scholarly Work on Teaching and Learning

Most papers presented by recipients of the Hans O. Mauksch award for contributions to undergraduate education have been literature reviews and/or theoretical, synthesis pieces. Recent topics include teaching practices based on syllabi (Grauerholz 2005a); the nature of coherence and integration in the sociology undergraduate curriculum and strategies to gain coherence (Berheide 2005); the concept of higher-level thinking in general and in sociology and how we help students achieve this thinking (Geertsen 2003); deep structure learning objectives and the challenges for sociology teachers attempting to reach these objectives with students via teaching strategies (Roberts 2002); and ethical challenges faced by sociology departments and instructors due to changes in the higher-education landscape (Van Valey 2001). Thus, these recent papers all focus on “big-picture” ideas in teaching and learning that are relevant both to sociology and to higher education more broadly.

Of the 10 sociologists selected as Carnegie Scholars, 8 focused their SoTL work on sociology students, courses, or SoTL. Their projects include assessment of learning in the sociology major capstone (Catherine Berheide); SoTL in sociology as represented in TS (Jeffrey Chin); practices of self-reflection in courses on disciplinary teaching preparation (Vaneeta D’Andrea); integrating service-learning into a “Principles of Sociology” course (John Eby); how sociology senior majors believe they learn the discipline and correlates of success in the major (Kathleen McKinney); the use of Web-based discussions to enhance student engagement and deep understanding (Caroline Persell); “stylized” assignments to improve performance (Deirdre Royster); and study in-depth across the sociology curriculum and the sociology core (Ted Wagenaar). These projects, then, reflect a wide range of research methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, and topics at micro and macro levels ranging from a focus on one pedagogical tool in one course to the status of SoTL in our discipline ([www.carnegiefoundation.org/CASTL/highered/scholarlist.htm](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/CASTL/highered/scholarlist.htm)).

Chin (2002) replicated Baker’s (1985) early analysis of papers published in TS. Chin’s sample was all papers published in TS between 1984 and 1999. Of the 185 papers classified as case studies or partial case studies of teaching experiences, 36 percent were about a total course design, for 19 percent the topic was a classroom device or tool, in 18 percent the topic was an out-of-class activity, for 10 percent it was a department program, another 8 percent

discussed modules, and 8 percent were coded as “other.” Most of the papers in this time period were articles (40 percent) or notes (36 percent). Thirty-seven percent of the papers were descriptive case studies of the author’s teaching experiences, 24 percent were commentaries, 8 percent were surveys, 30 percent were a combination of these categories, and 2 percent were “other.”

An informal analysis of papers in the last five years of TS also helps provide a sense of the type of current work on teaching and learning. Of the 180 articles, notes, and conversations, about 62 percent present teaching ideas and teaching tips, with little if any systematic empirical component. Another 18 percent are empirical studies of learning, assignments, courses, teaching techniques, and so on, and another 7 percent are content analyses of texts or other materials. About 7 percent are conceptual, theoretical, or review papers. A variety of other categories make up the remainder. Thus, most often shared publicly about teaching and learning in sociology via the ASA’s official pedagogical journal are individual teaching experiences, ideas, tips, and strategies—suggestions for “how to.”

In these five years, papers that deal with general issues of teaching, learning, curriculum, and so on, across subfields are most common (26 percent). An additional 12 percent are about teaching and learning in race, diversity, racial discrimination, and related areas. Seven percent focus on teaching about disabilities. Six percent deal with technology use and 5 percent address stratification. Of course, special issues or special sections in an issue can skew these results.

Similarly, current TS editor Grauerholz (2005b) writes,

Several themes emerged among the manuscripts published in 2004. These included the use of technology in the classroom, service and community-based learning, and strategies for teaching about social inequality, race, and gender. No intentional effort was made to solicit or publish manuscripts on these topics, rather the topics reflect some of the current concerns within the discipline and address the challenges we face in our teaching. (P. 15).

The titles of paper and panel sessions and workshops related to teaching at the seven major regional sociological society annual meetings for 2005 reveal that 26 percent of these 81 sessions/workshops were on meta or macro topics in teaching and learning such as “Issues and Concepts in Teaching and Learning” or “New Approaches to Teaching.” Another 19 percent focused on teaching a certain course or topical area such as “teaching crime” or “teaching stratification.” Service learning, civic engagement, and related topics were discussed in 15 percent of the sessions, while undergraduate research training or projects were the topic of 12 percent. The remaining 3 percent were on a variety of other specific issues such as the use of discussion. Fourteen percent discussed the use of technology for teaching and another 11 percent were on assessment or SoTL.

A few conclusions can be drawn about the type and topics of recent work on and interest in teaching and learning in sociology. The work focuses on undergraduates and teaching, in contrast to graduate students and learning. There is interest in both big-picture topics such as the curriculum or critical and deep thinking as well as in very narrow and focused local and specific assignment-based issues or research. Many subfields in the discipline have been topics of this work, but papers on inequality, stratification, race, class, and gender appear particularly prevalent. Much of what is written or presented could be considered a case study ranging from the “I tried it, I liked it” genre to, less often, more systematic attempts to reflect on and analyze a given assignment or course or curriculum.

### The Current Status of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Sociology

In this section, we discuss the status of SoTL work in sociology today. Baker concluded that, between 1973 and 1983, there was little in the journal that indicated cumulative scholarship on teaching and learning. Although much of the more recent work published in TS is considered to be scholarship as it builds on past work, is public, and is critically reviewed (Shulman 1999), Chin (2002) reports that 51 percent of the papers offer only “casual” informal data. Nineteen percent include no evaluation data at all, 18 percent offer a single type of evaluation data such as end of term attitude survey or an exam score, and 12 percent involve a systematic comparison using pre-post tests or an experiment with a control group.

Howery (2002) discusses the culture of teaching in our discipline, including the status of SoTL. She writes,

Politically, the scholarship of teaching and learning must become part of each discipline and engage a reasonable proportion of respected experts and scholars. While this strand of scholarship can enfranchise and tap the talents of sociologists at teaching-oriented institutions, the work will suffer if it is “interest-group scholarship,” that is, located primarily with faculty at teaching-oriented institutions. (P. 155)

Chin’s (2002) study indicates that there is a sizable and diverse group involved in SoTL in sociology, at least as measured by those publishing in TS in recent years. Looking at the authors of all the papers between 1984 and 1999, he found quite a bit of variability in both rank and type of institution represented. In addition, most of the authors (80 percent) had published only that one piece in TS during those years; thus, there were many different authors.

Grauerholz (2005b) writes that “judging from the number and quality of manuscripts submitted to *Teaching Sociology* [in 2004], the scholarship of teaching and learning within the discipline is flourishing” (p. 15). Based on our review and findings, we conclude that SoTL has increased and developed as a scholarly specialty within

sociology. Yet challenges remain (McKinney 2006). These challenges are the need to focus more on learning in addition to teaching, focus on graduate student teaching-learning in addition to undergraduates, focus on levels beyond the classroom level in addition to classroom research, continuing to spread interest in the work beyond the “choir,” increasing our involvement of students in this work as coresearchers not merely as research participants, and increasing replication of this work within the discipline but across institutions as well as across disciplines and international borders.

Perhaps the most important challenge is to increase the extent and nature of explicit application of this work. Reviewing empirical articles and notes in two recent volumes of TS, McKinney (2004), for example, reports on the frequency and nature of any discussion of the application of their SoTL results. Most frequently, the authors only summarize the strategy and their findings. They often include their perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of the teaching strategy or change. About half of the articles and notes included a brief discussion of how the authors have or will make changes in their own practice based on what they learned from the study. Less than a fourth of these papers incorporated a discussion of application beyond that individual faculty member and classroom—that is, there was infrequent discussion of topics such as the implications of the findings for other teachers or students, the curriculum, the department, the discipline, or the institution. Virtually no discussion is found of strategies for using SoTL results, for example, in developing a new course, in program review, or in budget requests that might be used as processes for application.

To help meet this challenge, in 2006, a new feature of TS involves authors of recent *American Sociological Review* (ASR) articles of interest to students in writing TS articles that detail ways their sociological research can be brought into the classroom through, for example, learner-centered strategies (Grauerholz 2005b). This is one first step toward creating new quality SoTL work that is appropriately applied.

### Best Practices in Teaching and Learning in Sociology (Policy Recommendations)

To obtain a sense of current “policy” recommendations for teaching and learning in our discipline, we look at recommendations for best practice and, in particular, those in the recent ASA task force report on the sociology major (McKinney et al. 2004). We also review evidence of the impact of policy and best practices.

The task force made 16 recommendations, aimed toward departments granting undergraduate degrees in sociology. Some of these include knowing and responding to the needs and interests of students and the mission of the institution; integrating research and theoretical analysis and experiences throughout the major; structuring the major with at least four levels and including substantive

sequences cutting across levels; increasing student learning related to multicultural, cross-cultural, and cross-national content; integrating sociology content and skills with that in other disciplines; encouraging the use of diverse and active pedagogies; offering and encouraging co- and extracurricular learning activities; and promoting and rewarding faculty development and involvement in scholarly teaching and SoTL ([www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/Lib\\_Learning\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.asanet.org/galleries/default-file/Lib_Learning_FINAL.pdf)).

Other ASA task forces are working to synthesize knowledge on the place of sociology in general education—how sociological thinking and content contributes to the liberal arts, the professional M.A. degree and what skills and outcomes it should engender, and assessment, looking at learning outcomes for sociology majors.

A related area for policy recommendations focuses on teaching sociology at the high school level. Issues here include best practices for teaching and learning sociology in high school, design of an “Advanced Placement” sociology course, concerns about adequate preparation and support for high school sociology teachers, and an appropriate fit between high school and college sociology courses. Interest in high school sociology has increased in recent years. Papers on teaching high school sociology appear more frequently than in the past (e.g., DeCesare 2004, 2005; Lashbrook 2001). An ASA task force worked on the equivalent of an AP course in sociology (Persell 2001). In addition, members of this task force and others are currently organizing and offering teaching workshops in several large cities for high school sociology instructors, and ASA collaborates with the National Council for the Social Studies to offer materials and training for high school teachers. Finally, the ASA Council has passed a guideline that high school sociology teachers have at least nine hours of course work in sociology.

Have best practice and policy recommendations affected teaching and learning in the discipline? There have been a number of papers published in response to the first “Liberal Learning and the Sociology Major” task force report (Eberts et al. 1990). These articles, in special sections or issues of *TS*, have discussed the meaning of the *core* in sociology (e.g., Grauerholz 2004) or how one or more departments have worked to redesign curricula or make other changes in line with the report such as developing a capstone course (e.g., Powers 2000; Sherohman 1997; Wagenaar 1993a, 1993b) or integrating research experiences (Kain 1999).

There appears to be little systematic, published research, however, on the impact of SoTL studies or reports of best practices on teaching, learning, and curriculum in the discipline. Kain (2002) conducted a content analysis of college catalogs from a sample of the top 10 schools in each of 10 categories ranked in the *U.S. News and World Report* survey of colleges. He reaches 14 conclusions related to departmental implementation of recommendations from the original *ASA Liberal Learning in the Sociology Major* report. For example, he states,

There appears to be significant progress in increasing sequencing in the major. This is particularly true in terms of the implementation of some sort of capstone experience. Nearly half of the sample requires both introductory and a capstone, and have additional sequencing beyond those requirements. (P. 22)

On the other hand, he found “Few institutions have implemented the recommendation to have multiple options for the required introductory course” (p. 23).

Thus, there are few and mixed results on the impact of best practices for teaching and learning in the discipline. Similarly, there is limited application of SoTL work beyond the classroom of the individual faculty member doing that work or beyond trying one specific teaching strategy offered by another. Clearly, this is an area for expansion and improvement in the future.

### **The Status of the Area of Teaching and Learning in the Discipline (Institutions and Organizations)**

Sociology exists, as do all disciplines, in a variety of social contexts or worlds (Pescosolido and Aminzade 1999). Department and institutional contexts play important roles in the nature and value of teaching and learning in higher education (Mauksch 1985). Wright et al. (2004) summarize some of the general literature in this area. They briefly discuss factors, including institutional size, mission, and research culture as well as department demographic profiles and mission. Contexts that enhance teaching and learning include those with strong instructional development support and departments with teaching- and learning-oriented cultures.

One way of assessing the current status of teaching and learning in the organizations and institutions of the discipline is to look at the value of teaching in the faculty-hiring process. Mahay and Caffrey (2002), in conducting a content analysis of the faculty job advertisements in *ASA Employment Bulletin* in 1999, report that “the majority of departments prefer applicants with teaching experience, but few request specific evidence of teaching effectiveness in their job advertisements. Moreover, we find that research-oriented institutions are less likely to request teaching credentials” (p. 203). More recent job ads in the *Bulletin*, however, increasingly ask for evidence of teacher preparation and skills such as student evaluations or a teaching portfolio.

There is also evidence of greater emphasis on teaching and learning in the training of our future faculty. A comparison of the 1995 *Guide to Graduate Departments* with the 2005 *Guide* (ASA 1995, 2005) suggests there was an increase in the amount or type of formal teacher training. In 1995, 41.5 percent of the departments indicated “a lot” and 26.4 percent reported “a little” preparation. Thirty-two percent of the departments had none. A decade later, 51.1 percent of departments offered “a lot” of preparation and

25.8 percent offered “a little,” with only 23.1 percent offering “none.” Most significantly, the ASA has led a project called Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) to explicitly prepare the next generation of sociology faculty with basic skills in and knowledge about teaching as well as give encouragement to consider SoTL as a specialty area.

A study of the types of sociology departments that produce the most scholarship on teaching in our discipline also provides information on the role of department and institutional characteristics. Marx and Eckberg (2005) studied the publications in TS from 1990 to 1999, looking at the authors’ institutional affiliations. They provide a list of the top 30 departments (out of over 1,100) in terms of teaching scholarship productivity and citation impact. They report that the top schools are quite diverse in terms of institutional characteristics, yet they are disproportionately public and larger compared with other schools. In addition, the five schools with the greatest TS productivity by graduate students all offered department-level teacher-training programs.

Finally, in the 30 years since the ASA Projects on Teaching began, there has been considerable institutionalization of teaching-related programs in the association. Each initiative or program provides a venue for SoTL work. As we write this chapter, the ASA Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology (STLS) just reached its highest membership count ever, surpassing 600 members. A few examples of the many other continuing programs connected with ASA include TS, the Department Resources Group, Teaching Enhancement Funds, the Teaching Resources Center, teaching workshops at the annual meetings, teaching awards, and special projects such as that on creating a curriculum to teach research ethics to students at all degree levels. Similar types of teaching-related programs also exist to varying degrees in regional sociological associations.

## PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2004, then ASA President and past recipient of the ASA Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award, Michael Burawoy, stimulated thinking about the importance of public sociologies. He argued that the first public is our students, and thus made the case for effective teaching. In this area, it appears that the current state of teaching and learning in sociology matches the state of teaching and learning in higher education more broadly. Specifically, we note both in sociology and higher education in general the move from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered paradigm (e.g., Barr and Tagg 1995) and related emphases on active and authentic pedagogies, community/civic engagement, recognizing diversity of students and learning styles, appropriate use of technology, assessment, and SoTL (e.g., Svinicki 2004).

There is also a great deal of scholarly work on teaching and learning in the field, primarily case studies of individual classes or assignments. However, minimal empirical evidence on factors such as social status, attitudes such as confidence, or behaviors such as time on task and involvement that are related to learning or success in our major exists. There has been an effort to understand and share best practices related to teaching and curriculum in sociology, but the frequency of use of such practices as well as the impact of sharing and using these practices is largely unknown. The status of teaching and learning, and SoTL in the discipline has improved, but traditional research is still privileged.

Our crystal ball is a bit fuzzy, but we offer some thoughts both in terms of what we expect for the future and our hopes for the future. We expect some additional progress in terms of increased positive status and value of teaching and learning, and SoTL in the discipline. Yet without significant changes in the value system, socialization of future faculty, and a reward structure in higher education generally and sociology specifically, teaching and learning as well as SoTL will remain less visible and less valued than other areas. Over 20 years ago, Mauksch (1985) wrote about the “structural and symbolic barriers to improved teaching in sociology,” which included conditions of employment, practice, and worth of college teachers—many of these remain today. We hope that a shift in values, training, and rewards to further improve the practice of teaching and learning will occur, and it will be such that SoTL will become an important integral domain of scholarship and expertise in sociology.

We expect that SoTL in sociology will continue to improve as the SoTL international initiative grows and as we meet some of the challenges mentioned earlier. More research on how sociology instructors actually do teach is critical. Similarly, more work on graduate level and high school sociology education and more emphasis on learning at all levels, not just teaching, will enhance our understanding. More studies on the role of social demographics, the physical environment, and group membership in learning also are needed. We hope to see more research on the general questions of how students best learn, how to introduce sociology to novices, and the correlates of learning and processes of learning sociology over time. Given the growing use of instructional technology in our discipline, we expect a surge in SoTL work in this area. SoTL in sociology in the future will probably involve greater efforts to replicate work at multiple institutions and settings such that local work will become more generalizable. More of this work will likely be longitudinal or experimental. Furthermore, greater interdisciplinary and international SoTL work in sociology is likely as these changes occur more generally. Most important, faculty will probably become better producers, consumers, and adapters of SoTL work, resulting in a systematic effort to improve teaching and to enhance student learning.



# *INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES*

## APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF APPALACHIA

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In 1898, an *American Journal of Sociology* article authored by George Vincent applied the ideas of Frederick Jackson Turner to interpret Appalachia as a “retarded frontier.” Since that time, sociologists have demonstrated interest in the study of the Appalachian region, and by the late 1960s, a structural functionalist model of Appalachian culture as a semiclosed, poverty-stricken, rural social system was well established. But unexpected events in the region, and the decline of structural functionalism, eventually led sociologists to advance new interpretations based on a multidisciplinary approach to Appalachian studies.

Social movements that focused on civil rights for African Americans, equal rights for women, antiwar efforts, environmental protection, worker health and safety issues, welfare rights, and social and economic justice were but a few of the domestic movements that gained force in the 1960s and 1970s and provoked new approaches in sociology. Each of these national movements was evidenced in Appalachia (Fisher 1993), testifying clearly against images and models of Appalachia as a fatalistic and tradition-bound region.

### APPALACHIA AS A RURAL SOCIAL SYSTEM

Until the late 1960s, Appalachia’s poverty was considered to result from geographical and cultural isolation. But sociologists also recognized that the region was rapidly

changing because of improved education, transportation, and mass communication. As the result of a steady but uneven process of cultural modernization, “the socio-cultural integration of rural Appalachia within the larger American society” was believed to be “occurring at a rapid rate” (Photiadis and Schwarzweller 1970:vii). New economic opportunities and changing cultural standards led sociologists to assert that traditional culture also was changing and, increasingly, the values of mass consumption and the middle-class lifestyles and urban American ethos were being embraced throughout the mountains. Two factors, however, seemed to impede the diffusion of modern values into Appalachia, namely, *persistent isolation* and *isolationism*. As a region in transition, the more geographically remote portions of Appalachia continued to resemble a traditionalistic society, while, under the duress of rapid change, some Appalachians were believed to be retreating into a subculture of poverty. More than any other institution in the region, education was judged to be the “cultural bridge” between Appalachia and the Great Society beyond, the solution to both isolation and isolationism (Schwarzweller and Brown 1970).

The fundamental assumption that economic improvements in Appalachia would result from the diffusion of urban values and cultural orientations into the region’s hinterlands was premised on what is now recognized as an erroneous assumption—that is, “due to the physical makeup, isolation, and homogeneity of its population, the Southern Appalachian Region, in particular its rural segment, has functioned in the past as a semi-autonomous

social system” (Photiadis 1970:5). Subsequent research undermines the view that the region was ever culturally isolated or homogeneous. During the 1960s, however, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) viewed the region as economically and culturally isolated: a “region apart—statistically and geographically” (as cited in Whisnant 1980:129). The ARC was designed to overcome such isolation.

Embracing the dominant structural functionalist theory of social change in vogue in American sociology at that time, values and cultural orientations were seen as foremost in facilitating social change. Thus, during the 1960s, it was believed that if Appalachian values were changed, normative (institutional) and psychological (personality) change would follow. Rupert Vance (1965) wrote the following:

Thus mountain isolation, which began as physical isolation enforced by rugged topography, became mental and cultural isolation, holding people in disadvantaged areas, resisting those changes that would bring them into contact with the outside world. The effect of conditions thus becomes a new cause of conditions, but the cause is now an attitude, not a mountain. (P. viii)

“To change the mountains,” Vance added, “[was] to change the mountain personality” (p. viii).

Sociologists of that era differed over just how open the “mountain personality” was toward change. James Brown (1970), for example, believed that “the people [of the region] are restless and ready for a change” (p. 45), while Richard Ball (1970) asked questions that resonated with commonly held stereotypes of Appalachian people:

Why, it is asked, are they so little interested in improving their lives? How can they resign themselves to acceptance of minimal welfare payments and then adopt the dole as a permanent way of life? Why aren’t they more eager to leave their hopeless environment for urban areas of greater opportunity? What, in short, explains their lack of ambition and their inability to arouse themselves to sustained efforts? Admittedly, their past has been bleak and hopeless, but why should this prevent them from responding to the opportunities of the present? (Pp. 72–73)

In response to such questions, sociologists measured value orientations, assessed social institutions and community life, and debated the extent to which a subculture of poverty existed throughout the region.

### Traditional Culture and the Subculture of Poverty

The most influential regionwide survey of values and attitudes was conducted by Thomas Ford (1962), whose survey of 190 counties in West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky provided an operational definition of Appalachia. Ford identified four

value dimensions that are central to Appalachian culture: *individualism and self-reliance, traditionalism, fatalism, and religious fundamentalism*. He answered “no” to the question “Have the Appalachian people clung to their frontier-agrarian traditions, resisting the philosophical premises of industrial society?” and interpreted his findings as supporting the “passing of provincialism” in the region (p. 9). Although Ford’s research reified a cultural legacy of “provincialism,” it also recognized its diminishing importance.

Popularized in Jack Weller’s (1965) widely read book, *Yesterday’s People*, Ford’s findings were largely accepted as the paradigm of Appalachian values. However, it was unclear how important such attitudes may have been in the past or even if they were distinct to the region. Using cross-regional survey data, Billings (1974) found only minimal attitude differences between Appalachian and non-Appalachian respondents in one southern state and demonstrated that these were largely attributable to the greater rurality of the mountain section.

Sociologists also studied rural, nonindustrial communities. Among the most important studies were those conducted by Brown ([1950] 1988), the four-decade longitudinal study of Beech Creek, Kentucky, by Schwarzweller, Brown, and Mangalam (1971), Mariam Pearsall’s (1959) study of “Little Smokey Ridge,” Tennessee, in the 1950s, and John Stephenson’s (1968) study of “Shiloh,” North Carolina. Each study confirmed the centrality of Appalachian rural kinship relations. In Beech Creek, Brown described a multilevel social structure of conjugal families, extended families, solidary “family groups” characterized by close cooperation and intimacy, and wider kinship “networks” that shaped social choices and horizons. In each of these studies, kinship strongly influenced patterns of residence, recreation and socializing, religious beliefs, work, political orientation, child-rearing practices, education, migration patterns, economic cooperation, and crisis management. Rural Appalachian families were described as larger and more fertile, more patriarchal, less child-centered, and placing more emphasis on extended family relationships compared with typical urban families.

Nonetheless, the national economy was altering Appalachian family life. The social organization of the rural Appalachian family was undergoing profound change (Blee and Billings 1986). Likewise, although impoverished by national standards, these communities were highly stratified, challenging monolithic images.

Although sociologists described only the most isolated subsistence farming communities of the Allegheny-Cumberland plateau, popular writers of the time frequently characterized them as typical of the entire region, often blurring these descriptions with those of mining communities that produced a distorted composite. According to Ford (1962),

To a considerable extent the popular but erroneous impression of a homogeneous mountain culture stems from the fact that

most contemporary studies have been of relatively isolated communities, often selected because they still preserved a way of life that was rapidly disappearing from the remainder of the Region. Not only has this bias created a false impression of homogeneity, but it has tended to obscure the tremendous cultural changes that have been taking place for many years. (P. 10)

Despite such disclaimers, essentialism was built into the sociology of the era because of the emphasis on structural functionalist theory. Using the concept of “familism” to describe both kin-based social relations and a psychological sense of shared identity and affectional ties among kin, sociologists froze the complexity of family life into a unitary cultural ethos—an “ism”—that put kinship cooperation at the center of social life.

For sociologists of the 1960s, however, familism defined a traditional and personal way of life for rural Appalachians that seemed to contradict the principles of individualism, achievement motivation, and universalism thought to be dominant in American society at the time. Although weakened by the forces of modernization, the lingering effects of familism continued to pose both structural- and individual-level problems. At the community level, the family-centered world provided only weak support for wider community life and collective problem solving. Understood to be a very effective and “efficient system of social security, the rural family was viewed as a potential hindrance to social change in the region because of its virtual monopoly over the socialization and interest-world of its members” (Brown and Schwarzweller 1971:89). Today, however, efforts to discern the specificity of family interaction that were consolidated under the rhetoric of familism have led to the abandonment of the concept (Batteau 1982; Blee and Billings 1986).

Even more important than familism, however, a culture of poverty was thought to be the greatest threat to individual and regional improvement. Although popularized in the writings of Weller (1965) and Caudill (1963), the culture of poverty thesis was not supported by empirical evidence. Ball (1968) described Appalachia’s rural culture as “an analgesic subculture” that buffered its members from failure and change. Observing that fixation, regression, aggression, and resignation were commonly observed behaviors among laboratory rats, Ball reasoned that such responses might well be expected from humans in Appalachia’s environment of hardship. There, the “frustration-instigated behaviors observable in laboratory experiments have become a thorough-going way of life, justified by religious doctrine and sustained by a social order” (Ball 1970:77). Ball, however, offered no direct evidence about human behavior. Instead, he quoted the British historian Arnold Toynbee (1946), who wrote that Appalachian mountain people, having failed to meet the challenge of their harsh environment, were “no better than barbarians,” representing “the melancholy spectacle of a people who have acquired civilization and then lost it” (p. 149).

## EMERGENCE OF THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPALACHIAN STUDIES MOVEMENT

Social activism throughout Appalachia in the 1970s and 1980s stimulated what many observers termed an *Appalachian Renaissance*. The academic expression of this renaissance included the creation of Appalachian research centers and Appalachian studies programs throughout the region in the 1970s: *Appalshop*, a grassroots multimedia center for documentary film making, radio, recording, and performance established in 1969; the initiation in 1972 of the *Appalachian Journal*; and the establishment in 1977 of the multidisciplinary Appalachian Studies Association (ASA). The ASA was created “to coordinate analysis of the region’s problems across disciplinary lines” and “to relate scholarship to regional needs and the concerns of the Appalachian people” (Banks, Billings, and Tice 1993:283). In this context, disciplinary boundaries between sociology and neighboring fields were blurred.

The Highlander Center, located in Appalachian Tennessee and an early leader in the training of southern labor and civil rights activists, also played a prominent role in redirecting the style and focus of research on Appalachia (Glen 1996). Sociologists associated with the center in the 1970s and 1980s, such as John Gaventa and Helen Lewis, promoted the blend of scholarship and activism through participatory research. The prime example was a landmark study by the Appalachian Land Ownership Task Force (1983) that trained local researchers to investigate mineral rights, land ownership, and taxation on more than 20 million acres of land in 80 counties spanning six states in the region. Its documentation of vast amounts of absentee-owned, but minimally taxed, land and mineral resources spearheaded tax reform efforts in several Appalachian states and led to grassroots organizations such as Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC). New attention to power, history, and activism made many younger sociologists critical of the objectivism in mainstream sociology, sensitive to the power relations embedded in scientific knowledge, and more open to dialogue and partnership between citizens and scholars.

Postmodern and poststructuralist theories, as noted by Banks et al. (1993), also exerted a strong influence. Under the influence of postmodernism, the universalism and essentialism of the “modernist” sociology of the 1960s gave way to the recognition of difference and diversity in the region. Universalistic notions of Appalachia and Appalachian identity were replaced by complex plural conceptions of regional and population diversity such as racial identities (Billings 2004; Hartigan 1999; Incoe 2001; Lewis 1987; Trotter 1990), gender (Anglin 2002; Maggard 1999; Scott 1995; Smith 1998; Yarrow 1991), and nationality/ethnicity (Fones-Wolf and Lewis 2002) and how these positionalities were related to social class. Likewise, the postmodern wariness of

essentialism led to self-consciousness about the politics of representation and writing. Rather than transparent vessels that convey truths without influencing their content, representations were now understood to shape what is seen and accepted as true, leading to important studies of the social construction of Appalachia in discourse and the role of stereotypes. Appalachian studies explored cultural topics such as the politics of cultural intervention in the region, ranging from folk festivals and settlement houses (Whisnant 1983) to Americanization programs for European immigrants in coal mining communities (Hennen 1996). In addition, the commodification of highland crafts and music (Ardery 1998; Becker 1998), rhetorical and performance styles among Appalachian churches (Titon 1988), the use of religious resources in class-based oppositional movements (Billings 1990), religious snake handling (Kimbrough 1995), the culture of underground economies (Halperin 1990), and cultures of resistance and renewal among grassroots reform movements (Hinsdale, Lewis, and Waller 1995) were important areas of inquiry.

## RETHINKING CULTURE IN APPALACHIAN STUDIES

The representations of Appalachian culture of the 1960s are now understood as having been fueled by stereotypes, overlooking diversity and complexity in the history of the region, and being used to blame poverty on the Appalachian poor in ways that overlooked institutionalized power and economic exploitation in the region. Consequently, the new scholarship explores the literary invention of tradition, the uses of tradition, and the actual social history of the region.

Robert Wuthnow's (1987) four dimensions of cultural analysis provide a useful way of framing the new cultural studies of Appalachia. In addition to viewing Appalachian culture as a pattern of subjective values, it can also be viewed as an objective structure whose forms and boundaries are embodied in its artifacts, discourses, and texts; as being performed and transformed by active agents; and as invested with power and authority.

The multidimensional approach to Appalachian cultural studies deconstructs the simplistic binary oppositions—traditionalism/modernism, fatalism/activism, and individualism/collectivism—that underlay the paradigmatic sociological characterization of the area's culture prior to the advent of Appalachian studies. The deconstructive project of Appalachian cultural analysis is especially apparent in recent studies of Appalachian traditions. Thus, the value theme of individualism, when deconstructed, leads to questions that go beyond values and attitudes to the forging of identities and solidarities in Appalachia and beyond fatalism to questions about fear, quiescence, complicity, and activism in the region.

## The Literary Invention of “Traditional” Appalachia

An especially robust area of inquiry examines the social construction of Appalachia as “a coherent region inhabited by a homogeneous population possessing a uniform culture” (Shapiro 1978: ix). Early travelogues written shortly after the American Civil War first pictured the mountain South in popular magazines as “a strange land and peculiar people” (Shapiro 1978:ix). Soon thereafter, local color fiction writers such as John Fox Jr. published stories and novels of alternatively the innocent and degraded, but always picturesque, mountaineers. Missionaries, settlement house workers, and educators further circulated such tales to legitimate uplifting a worthy but neglected people and to attract benefactors, while developers, railroads, and industry used these same characterizations to argue for the displacement of an unworthy and irredeemable population from the vast Appalachian storehouse of mineral and timber resources (Billings and Blee 1996). Finally, folk song collectors and leaders of the handicraft revival movement embellished images of quaint cultural practices in a region where time stood still (Whisnant 1983).

Henry Shapiro's (1978) intellectual history of the idea of Appalachia was the first important effort to place this tradition of writing in historical perspective. He analyzed the diverse organizational interests that motivated mythical accounts and explored how the term *Appalachia* came to signify a region seemingly untouched by progress, a cultural “other” by which American economic success elsewhere could be measured. Others followed Shapiro's lead by looking at the discourse on Appalachia through subsequent decades and in other forms of the media such as film and television and by tracing the evolving nature and changing uses of Appalachian stereotypes (Batteau 1990; Becker 1998; Billings, Norman, and Ledford 1999; Harkins 2004; Whisnant 1983; Williamson 1995).

Other scholars amplified the performative and institutional dimensions of the cultural construction of Appalachia to show how the discourse on traditional Appalachia was used to market invented traditions such as faux highland handicrafts (Becker 1998) and how, once institutionalized into authoritative texts and expert knowledge, various representations of Appalachia were used to legitimate public and private cultural and social interventions in the region (Whisnant 1980, 1983).

## The Uses of Tradition

Scholars who research the stereotypic construction of Appalachia in popular and academic writings about the region often do so from a postmodern perspective: They typically refrain from commenting on actual mountain life, focusing instead on how Appalachia is represented, especially by those outside the region. In an alternative approach, other sociologists contend that static notions of traditionalism conceal the many ways that Appalachian

residents themselves make and remake their culture as they negotiate and reinterpret the meanings of their past for their own purposes. An important example is Foster's (1988) ethnographic study of the politics of culture in Ashe County, North Carolina. Rather than presenting a fixed image of local culture as a set of collective traits, Foster argues that culture appears

in this context as extraordinarily fluid and changeable; it operates as a placeholder, a representation that shifts, deviates, and often wobbles in an unstable and quixotic fashion, depending on the desires, options, constraints, and interventions at the crossroads of the present. (P. 203)

In an analysis of the successful efforts of local citizens in 1975 to prevent a power company from damming a portion of the New River to create a reservoir that would have displaced nearly 300 families, Foster examines local resistance as a dramaturgic process, a politics of representation. He highlights the practices Ashe County citizens used to "save the river" and to objectify a version of their cultural past to planners and outside policymakers as a way of life worth preserving. Ironically, by choosing to represent their threatened way of life in terms of stereotyped images, folk-culture artifacts, and old-time music, grassroots activists inadvertently opened the door to the commodification of a partial version of their culture and thus potentially to further domination.

Foster returned to Ashe County nearly 10 years after the struggle had been won to find that the embrace of mythic forms of identity that had served to stop the dam project had also begun to change the rhetorical forms through which local people understood themselves, their history, and their community. More important, from the standpoint of the understanding of tradition, Foster showed how Appalachian culture provides a "forum for negotiating and renegotiating meaning," not a set of fixed and final values operating as so many writers had previously implied.

Like the dramaturgical approach to culture, the institutional approach looks at how culture is expressed but goes further by asking how resources and organizations are used to institutionalize preferred versions of culture. Power, according to this approach, is used both to reinforce and to resist diverse expressions of culture. A key work by Gaventa (1980), which shows the inexorable link between culture and power, disputes the imputation of both traditionalism and fatalism as core cultural traits in the Appalachian region.

The coal-mining communities in the Clear Fork Valley of Appalachian Tennessee that Gaventa studied have experienced many of the forms of injustice and exploitation for which Central Appalachia is noted. These include the monopolization of land by absentee owners, political domination, taxation inequities, poor working conditions and low wages, deindustrialization, environmental ruin, and social neglect. On the surface, local residents appear to have accepted such conditions as their inevitable fate and have mobilized little opposition to them, even though

Appalachians in other communities have challenged similar conditions (Fisher 1993). Thus, to observers assuming the existence of an open political system where such wrongs could be addressed, quiescence would appear to confirm that local people are too deeply mired in a traditionalistic and fatalistic culture to dissent and, furthermore, that their individualism prevents them from mounting collective opposition. Gaventa (1980) shows that "beneath the expressed sense of legitimacy or fatalism is fear" (p. 206).

By examining the history of the Clear Fork Valley, Gaventa shows that local elites with the power to win overt contests, exclude both issues and participants from local arenas of decision making and shape the wants, values, roles, and beliefs of the powerless before challenges arise have managed to enforce routines of nonchallenge within these communities. Coercion and its constant threat—along with vulnerability, feelings of inadequacy, and fears of reprisal among the powerless—have contributed to long-term periods of quiescence, which appear to confirm fatalism as a core cultural trait or deficiency of the local population. In reality, however, the appearance of quiescence implies neither apathy nor ignorance among elements of the population but, rather, relative powerlessness. Whether people or communities in Appalachia are quiescent or rebellious depends on the balance of forces in the local "field of power," as Gaventa's empirical comparisons through time and across Appalachian communities make clear.

Gaventa's assertion that rebellions occur when power relationships are altered has found important empirical support in research on more recent activism in the same vicinity. In a study of community activism against water pollution caused by a local tannery, Cable (1993) demonstrates that the transformation of individual resistance ("periodic 'fussin'") into collective opposition depended not only on increased distress but also on changes in the local power field. She notes three changes that altered the local balance of power: (1) the emergence nationally of the environmental movement, which both legitimated local claims of environmental injustice and led to the establishment of federal agencies to deal with them; (2) the consolidation of public schools in the area, which facilitated greater interaction and familiarity among local communities; and (3) the arrival of individuals in the locality possessing both leadership skills and knowledge of governmental routines, which contributed to the ability to challenge the resistance of local authorities.

Additional studies combine dramaturgical and institutional analysis to examine the creative uses of tradition while also reconceptualizing traditionalism and fatalism by interpreting their seeming reality as an index of power relations. Richard Couto (1993), for instance, documented the importance of coal miners' "historical memory" of early working conditions and labor victories in current labor activism, and Scott (1995) has shown how local power and conflict shape communities' collective memories of past events and conflicts such as mining disasters and labor activism. Mary Anglin (1993, 2002) has shown how women workers in Appalachian North Carolina's

mica industry have used the imagery of kinship to clarify loyalties, assert rights, and strengthen bonds of class solidarity and emotional support at work. Anglin also demonstrates that the employers of these women use the same symbolism to inculcate a sense of accountability and loyalty to the company, suggesting the multiple and contradictory ways in which cultural traditions can be put to use and, like activism, how the sociohistorical context and power field shape that usage. Anglin's work is also an example of new studies of gender in Appalachia that further an understanding of Appalachian traditions.

It is now recognized that the white male experience has been universalized in Appalachian studies and that women's experiences have been neglected (Smith 1998). Whereas the concept of familism implied the fixity of gender relations, Maggard (1999) and Seitz (1995) have shown how gender roles undergo change when women activists, both as wage earners and as members of wage-dependent families, struggle for economic justice in Appalachia. One of the ironies of patriarchy is that non-employed women in the so-called traditional families may have more flexible time schedules that permit them to commit to local activism and attend public hearings and thus play leading roles in grassroots movements despite traditionally defined gender roles (Cable 1993). In a study of early opposition to strip mining, Bingham (1993) reports that women activists have sometimes manipulated tradition by strategically placing themselves in dangerous situations of direct confrontation, believing that their opponents would be less willing to apply customary forms of intimidation and violence used on Appalachian males to silence women protesters.

Finally, studies of gender—such as those of racial oppression in Appalachia—do not dispute the prevalence of conservative (traditional) ideologies of patriarchy and racism in the region (Griffin 2004). Instead, they challenge the simplistic understanding of traditionalism as a core cultural trait of Appalachia.

## **The Social History of Appalachia**

A third challenge to the static image of tradition in Appalachia has come from historical studies of the impact of extractive industries such as coal mining and timber on communities, demography, patterns of economic development, and poverty (Lewis 1998). These studies contend that Appalachia is poor because of the nature of its integration with—not isolation from—the American corporate economy. Eller's (1982) study of the acquisition of land, timber, and mineral resources and the building of railroads and coal towns in the region by outside investors was pathbreaking. Other studies examined how those outside groups achieved political control (Gaventa 1980) and the challenges to these investors by militant labor (Corbin 1981). While some sociologists interpreted Appalachian social and economic development as capitalist industrialization (Banks 1980; Walls 1976), others interpreted it as a process of "colonization" through which outsiders gained

entry, established control, educated and converted the "natives," and maintained control (Lewis, Johnson, and Askins 1978; Lewis, Kobak, and Johnson 1978). In this model, cultural patterns associated with familism and religious fundamentalism were reinterpreted as defensive responses to colonialism rather than the persistence of traditionalism (Lewis, Kobak, et al. 1978).

The interpretation of Appalachia as an "internal colony" highlights the importance of political domination and economic exploitation in the history of Appalachia and the associated poverty. The colonial model inspired the participatory study of land ownership and also helped fuel grassroots activism. But the model lost favor among sociologists because of the dualism of its central trope of insiders versus outsiders. Marxists were especially quick to point out that regions do not exploit regions; rather, classes exploit classes (Southern Mountain Research Collective 1983–1984). Furthermore, analysts who employed the colonial model tended to portray Appalachians as innocent but passive victims of colonization, inadvertently casting attention away from the important role of powerful local classes and elites in the region's development. They also tended to romanticize Appalachia's past before coal mining, picturing it as a veritable Garden of Eden of thriving small farms and egalitarian social relations (Shifflett 1991). Here, the mythical discourse of Appalachian otherness still lurked behind the thinking of otherwise progressive scholars.

To understand the social forces that predisposed the region to the dependent economic development first decried by the colonial model, scholars have begun to probe the even more distant Appalachian past. They have debated the relative importance of commerce and family subsistence (nonmarket) strategies of livelihood from the early settlement era to recent times. Working with world systems theory, Dunaway (1996) demonstrated the depth of previously overlooked industrial development in antebellum Appalachia. Identifying more than 6,000 industrial enterprises from a large sample of mountain counties in 1860, Dunaway contends that Appalachia was already deeply incorporated in the circuits of world capitalism long before the era of coal industrialization and that much of its population was fully proletarianized by the time of the Civil War. Her more recent work emphasizes the importance of slavery in the antebellum economy (Dunaway 2003).

Many scholars reject Dunaway's assessment of the extent of commerce and proletarianization in the antebellum era. Salstrom (1994), for instance, points to the importance of noncommercial subsistence farming in the nineteenth-century mountain economy, portraying its effects in terms of the psychological mentality of farmers—rather than the social relations of production and reproduction in agriculture. He suggests that because of geographical constraints on marketing, an entrepreneurial spirit evident among early settlers was soon replaced by a safety-first, noncommercial attitude toward survival.

Using Moore's (1966) path-dependent model of the impact of rural class relations on patterns of development, Billings and Blee (2000) examined the interconnections of

commerce and slaveholding, subsistence farming, and the local state in nineteenth-century Clay County, Kentucky, and the "Beech Creek" community first described by Brown in the 1940s. These analysts show that the exploitation of slave labor in the antebellum salt-manufacturing industry integrated sections of the Kentucky mountains into a nexus of extra-local commerce, laid the foundation for the political domination of non-slave-owning farmers by wealthy slaveholders, and paved a racially distinct road to poverty for the area's African American population. While slaveholding prompted more extensive commercial development than previously recognized, the authors claim that the vast majority of white farm families in the study area lived independent of both slaveholding and the commerce it generated. Class patterns of self-exploitation and the exploitation of family members, in a system of subsistence production regulated by norms of kinship and neighborhood reciprocity, provided secure livelihoods for many decades in the nineteenth century until, eventually, population increase and family farm subdivision, along with consequent land shortages and soil depletion, undermined the viability of subsistence farming. By the end of the century, local elites in the area assisted outside capitalists in the extraction of resources, while impoverished farmers turned to low-paying jobs in the emerging wage labor sector. Clientalism and political corruption deformed local governance and public life.

In contrast to the earlier emphasis on individualism as a core cultural trait of the region, recent Appalachian scholars have also explored the history of solidarities in the region, including racial identities, interests, and sectional loyalties during the Civil War (Noe and Wilson 1997), elite factionalism (mountain feuds) and its impact on social development (Billings and Blee 2000; Waller 1988), immigrant ethnic communities (Fones-Wolf and Lewis 2002), and the class identities and ideologies of owners/managers and labor in industry (Scott 1995; Walls 1978). The exploration of such solidarities, including slaveholding (Dunaway 2003), has challenged images of Appalachian homogeneity, while the identification of disparities in power and wealth among regional groups has challenged images of preindustrial equality. Such studies suggest that despite myths about Appalachia's isolation and lack of economic diversity, Appalachia was not that different from other nineteenth-century rural American regions before the modern era of coal mining (Pudup, Billings, and Waller 1995).

## ANALYSIS IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

Looking ahead, twenty-first-century analysts of Appalachia will undoubtedly continue to assess the persistence of

poverty and evaluate the effects of economic restructuring. The economic, political, and environmental problems facing Appalachia are not unique. Indeed, they are similar to those confronting poor communities throughout the world. While Appalachia's apparent "peculiarities" engaged sociologists of the 1960s, attention is now being drawn to the comparable effects of economic markets, capitalist priorities, and neoliberal governmental policies in the region and around the world. In what is described as a heightened era of globalization, it is likely that the interest in historical-cultural study that has recently engaged Appalachian scholars will be complemented by comparative studies of similar regions on a global scale.

Appalachian scholars have challenged stereotypes of fatalism through the documentation of activist grassroots organizations. At the end of the century, the focus of investigation was on why some organizations are more effective than others (Couto 1999) and why communities—many dominated by local elites (Duncan 1999) and characterized by political corruption and patronage (Billings and Blee 2000)—vary in civic capacity. Such issues offer important new challenges for the twenty-first-century sociology of Appalachia. Environmental sociology is also likely to flourish, especially in response to the damage wrought by new surface mining methods such as mountaintop removal (Reece 2005).

In contrast to stereotypes of Appalachian isolation, Appalachia has existed as a global region for many decades. Early twentieth-century demand for coal reflected the role of the United States in the global economy, as did the arrival of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe in Appalachia's coalfields (Fones-Wolf and Lewis 2002). Similarly, changes in the region's economy and demography reflect new transnational trends such as the increasing presence of Hispanics in Southern Appalachia (Obermiller 2004). Simultaneously, the search for economic development options directs the region outward as local activists travel to worker cooperatives in Spain's Mondragon region, to the networked niche-based firms of Modena and Bologna, Italy, and to the World Social Forum in Brazil in search of new economic models. Likewise, Appalachian environmental activists increasingly connect via the Internet with others around the world who contend with similar problems. Thus, globalization, whether thought of as transnational economic processes or as new forms of transnational citizen struggles for economic justice, is likely to be an increasingly important topic of study in the region (Reid and Taylor 2002; Weinbaum 2004). Finally, new forms of scholar/citizen partnership will likely emerge as the issues described are processed within the discipline and by community leaders across the region.



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## ASIAN AND ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

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Asian studies and Asian American studies are two closely related interdisciplinary fields of study. Both draw on a wide range of disciplines, including sociology, political science, anthropology, history, literature, and language studies. In some universities in the United States, the two are part of the same program, while at many others, they are completely separate. Asian studies is considered one of the area studies in academia, and its concentration is on a geographic region. Other area studies include Latin American studies, African studies, and European studies. Asian American studies is considered one of the ethnic studies along with black or African American studies, Native American studies, and Hispanic or Latino studies. These fields of concentration take ethnic groups, rather than regions, as their subject matters. Since Asian American studies deals directly with ethnicity, an implicitly sociological concept, sociology tends to play a more central role in it than in Asian studies.

In the following sections, we first describe the origins of Asian studies and the growth of this field since World War II, paying particular attention to the role of sociology in Asian studies. We then turn to the more recent emergence of Asian American studies out of the expansion of the Asian American population and the development of ethnic studies. Since sociology has been even more closely linked to Asian American studies than to Asian studies, we devote somewhat more attention to the former. In addition, as we attempt to make clear, while Asian studies has

become a fairly well-defined and accepted program within universities, Asian American studies continues to be the focus of debate and controversy, with sociology playing a particularly important part in discussions over this emerging concentration.

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### ORIGINS OF ASIAN STUDIES

The origins of Asian studies may be traced to the European tradition of Orientalism. This tradition grew out of the desire of European countries to acquire information and understanding about the lands to the east that the Europeans had either colonized or intended to colonize. One of the earliest formal institutions for orientalist activities was the Dutch Asian Learned Society, founded in Jakarta, Indonesia, in 1778, about a century after Indonesia had been gradually colonized by the Dutch. Soon after, in 1784, the British founded their own Asian Learned Society in Calcutta, India. The French established the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris in 1795.

The Palestinian born scholar Edward Said (1979) criticized Orientalism, and to some extent modern Asian studies, as a tool of European colonialism. Although Said was concerned primarily with the European and later American study of the Middle East, his critique extended to Western thinking about other regions known as Asia. Said held that

Asia or the Orient was itself the product of a Western society that made broad generalizations from contrasts between European and Euro-American states and cultures and the vast stretches of land to the east. "Orientalism," according to Said, "is a style of thought" based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident" (p. 2). In addition, Said argued that Western scholars turned this broad idea of the Orient into an object of study to impose their own intellectual categories on it. Said maintained that modern area studies were simply a softer version of Orientalism. In part, as a response to the objections of Said and others, contemporary sociologists and scholars in other disciplines focusing on Asia have been sensitive to historical issues of colonialism and power.

### Growth of Asian Studies

Asian studies, and other geographic area studies, took off in the United States during and after World War II, as a result of U.S. involvement in Asia (Pye 2001). The Social Science Research Council (SSRC), in particular, became a major actor in social scientific approaches to postwar Asian studies. Although the SSRC was founded in 1923, it was really during the 1950s that it became a supporter of social research around the world, including Asia (Fisher 1993). By the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the SSRC was promoting social science in Asia through its East Asia Program, South Asia Program, and Southeast Asia Program.

On the eve of the American entry into World War II, scholars interested in Asia founded the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) in 1941. Originally established as the publisher of the *Far Eastern Quarterly*, later renamed the *Journal of Asian Studies*, the AAS expanded rapidly in membership and organizational scope in succeeding years. By 1970, its subareas had developed to the point that the AAS organized itself into four elective area councils: the Northeast Asia Council, the Southeast Asia Council, the China and Inner Asia Council, and the South Asia Council. The AAS created a Council of Conferences in 1977 to communicate and coordinate with conferences of Asian studies scholars throughout the United States. The AAS has become the primary organization for this field of study in North America (Berger 1987; Hucker 1973).

The 1940s and 1950s saw the creation of many of the major Asian studies programs at American universities. The University of California, Berkeley, had long maintained courses and directed faculty research toward Asia due to the university's location on the Pacific coast. However, Berkeley first established its interdisciplinary Asian studies undergraduate program in 1949. Ten years later, Berkeley changed the name of the program to the Group in Asian Studies.

Despite offering an Asian studies program from 1949 on, Berkeley did not begin to offer an undergraduate group major in this area until 1975. By the beginning of the

twenty-first century, Berkeley's Group in Asian Studies held more than 70 faculty members from 15 different departments. These faculty members included four sociologists, with research and teaching concentrations in Japanese business, Chinese civil society, emigrants from Korea, political sociology, and social movements (University of California, Berkeley 1997).

Harvard University's connection to Asian studies began in 1928 with the foundation of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. Initially funded by the estate of inventor and Aluminum Company of America founder Charles M. Hall, the Harvard-Yenching Institute has been legally and administratively separate from Harvard but closely associated with Asian activities at the university. Dedicated to the promotion of higher education in Asia, the Institute helped to support universities in China and elsewhere in Asia throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Since the expansion period of Asian studies after World War II, the Institute has offered hundreds of fellowships for overseas study to faculty members of Asian universities. At Harvard, the Institute has supported Asian studies by publishing books through Harvard's Asia Center and by publishing the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.

Despite the relatively long history of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the Asia Center at Harvard is a new development. Created only in 1997, the Asia Center supports interdisciplinary research and study projects primarily in East Asia and also in South and Southeast Asia. The Asia Center also oversees Harvard's Regional Studies Program in East Asian Studies (Hanan 2003).

Cornell University is home to some of the most extensive Asian studies programs in the United States. Cornell has offered courses on Asia since at least 1879 when the university first began teaching the Chinese language. However, as in many other institutions, the growth of the program occurred mainly in the years following World War II. One of the most important events occurred in 1950 when Chinese language Professor Knight Biggerstaff and five colleagues founded Cornell's China Program.

The Southeast Asia Program at Cornell was established in the same year as the China Program. Since then, the SEAP has become one of the foremost centers in the United States for the study of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. In 1953, Cornell established the South Asia Program, concentrating research and teaching on the Indian subcontinent, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

### NEW SOCIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY IN ASIAN STUDIES

Economic growth in China and elsewhere in Asia at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries spurred a new expansion in social scientifically based Asian studies. The Urban China Research Network, led by American sociologist John Logan and founded in

1999, has been particularly active in studying social change in China. The network established two ongoing research networks, a group on Spatial Restructuring, Urban Planning, and politics, and a group on Urban Transformation in China and Reorganization of the State in an era of globalization. The first group has aimed at documenting neighborhood level changes associated with urban change and at understanding the political decisions and planning processes affecting urban change. The second has aimed at looking at administrative and political changes in China, understanding the impact of globalization and resistance to globalization in local, urban areas (Logan 2001; Ma and Wu 2005).

### Origins of Asian American Studies

Sociology has been one of the disciplines represented in Asian studies in the United States, and it has formed a particularly important part in the study of social change in Asia undertaken by researchers such as those associated with the Urban China Research Network. Nevertheless, sociology has been even more closely related to ethnic studies programs in Asian American studies, a field that has developed more recently than Asian studies. While Asian studies grew out of the involvement of the West in the continent of Asia, Asian American studies was the product of movement from Asia to North America, resulting in scholarly concerns with people of Asian origin on the American continent.

Asian American studies, as a derivative field of sociology and other disciplines such as anthropology, political science, and history, became a matter of interest to sociologists because of both scholars' and students' urgent need to take part in and produce work that spoke to Asian American lived experiences (Loo and Mar 1985–1986; Nakanishi and Leong 1978; Omi and Takagi 1995; Wat 1998; Zhou and Gatewood 2000). These particular and diverse experiences were not addressed by the prevailing university curricula.

Both teaching and scholarship in Asian American studies began to attract attention around the 1960s. One of the key figures in the development of the discipline was Stanford M. Lyman, often said to have been the “father of Asian American studies.” Lyman is believed to have taught the first Asian American studies course at Berkeley in 1957, when he began teaching a course titled “The Oriental in America.”

As Lyman continued his own teaching and research in the field, the growth of Asian American studies throughout American colleges and universities was spurred by the Asian American movement and by a new interest in ethnic studies in general. The first ethnic studies program was founded at San Francisco State College in 1968, following the efforts of the Third World Liberation Front, “a coalition of African Americans, Latino Americans/Chicanos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans” (Zhou and Gatewood 2000:2). In November 1968, students of this coalition went

on strike, demanding a curriculum more reflective of their own lives and experiences. Zhou and Gatewood list three central goals of the movement as follows: (1) students wanted to “redefine education and to make their curriculum more meaningful to their own lives, experiences, and histories and more reflective of the communities in which they lived”; (2) “they demanded that racial and ethnic minorities play a more active role in the decision-making process and that university administrators institute an admissions policy to give minorities equal access to advanced education”; and (3) “they attempted to effect larger changes in the institutional practices urging administrators to institutionalize ethnic studies at San Francisco State College” (p. 2). In sum, then, the three main goals of the movement consisted of a redefinition of the nature of education at San Francisco State College and other universities, equal access to education for minorities, and the normalization or institutionalization of ethnic studies to general university curricula. Within 10 years of the inception of ethnic studies at San Francisco State College, University of California at Los Angeles, San Francisco State University, and the University of Washington provided students with graduate programs; thus, for some universities, the development of both academic programs and graduate programs was quick and generally successful. By the early twenty-first century, Asian American studies programs had been established at all of the University of California and the California State University Campuses (p. 4).

The body of scholarship that began to emerge from these activist currents drew on a number of earlier pioneering works. Frank Miyamoto's (1939) *Social Solidarity among the Japanese in Seattle* was one of the first community studies to apply sociological thinking to an Asian community in the United States. Later, in 1953, Paul Siu wrote a Ph.D. dissertation on the Chinese laundryman that extended the thinking associated with the Chicago School in sociology to an Asian group. Many of the early works on Asian Americans, such as Rose Hum Lee's (1960) *The Chinese in the United States of America*, were works of history. Stanford Lyman (1986), in addition to teaching what may have been the first Asian American course, also drew together the sociological traditions of Robert Park, Max Weber, and Georg Simmel to write his 1961 Ph.D. dissertation analyzing the social organization of Chinese and Japanese communities in the United States during the nineteenth century. The dissertation was later published as *Chinatown and Little Tokyo: Power, Conflict and Community among Chinese and Japanese Immigrants to America*. Along with Lyman's other work, this helped to establish Asian people in America as an important topic for sociological study.

With the rapid increase of the Asian American population in the years following 1970, questions of how Asians were adapting to American society and Asian American ethnic identity began to dominate the literature. The comparison of Asian Americans to other groups became a

major method. Along these lines, sociologist Ivan Light published an influential comparative study of business enterprise among Chinese, Japanese, and blacks in the United States in 1972. Matute-Bianchi (1986) applied the comparative approach to student achievement in an article "California Mexican American and Japanese American Students." With the development of new Asian American communities, the issue of how ethnic communities might affect adaptation and identity became central. Studies such as Hurh and Kim's 1984 book on Korean immigrant communities began to examine how ethnic residence and ethnic cohesion might shape the lives of Asian Americans.

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the arrival of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos brought new groups into consideration by scholars concerned with Asian American issues. Scholars such as the anthropologist David W. Haines and James M. Freeman began to explore issues of immigrant adaptation among these newly arrived Southeast Asians. During that same period, scholars began to show an interest in Asian Americans in general, as a category, in addition to specific Asian groups. For example, authors such as Harry H. L. Kitano and Roger Daniels (1988) began to describe America's growing Asian populations as "emerging communities."

### **Current Status of Asian and Asian American Studies**

Asian studies and Asian American studies are both connected and separate as university fields of study. Both have resulted from increasing linkages between the West and Asia. The great expansion of Asian studies came with the shrinking of distances between continents in the years following World War II, and the expansion continued to increase with American involvement in Asia. Asian American studies also resulted from that shrinking of distances, since the growth of the Asian American population followed from the American involvement.

Despite the connections, though, there are clear differences. Asian studies has become accepted and well established at universities throughout North America. While individual scholars within this field of regional studies may have activist projects, political activism is not one of the primary currents driving scholarly activities. Asian American studies, by contrast, is still striving for recognition as a distinct field of study, with some of the most notable objections coming from sociology departments. Moreover, this newer academic field, as part of the ethnic studies movement, often tends to display a strong activist orientation, and a number of its scholars maintain ties with various forms of identity politics.

### **Scholarship in Asian and Asian American Studies in the 21st Century**

Asian and Asian American studies are extremely broad fields, and scholarship in both will be diverse over the

course of the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some trends in scholarship that are likely to continue into the future. Within Asian studies, China has been a major geographical area of concern and the largest number of sociological studies concerned with Asia have concentrated on this large nation. Studies of China, moreover, are likely to become increasingly central as China grows in political and economic importance on the world scene.

The topics that will be of greatest concern to sociologists working on Asia will most likely be the social consequences of rapid urbanization, the movement from socialist or traditional economies to market economies, and internal migration from rural to urban areas. In addition to the articles in the book edited by John Logan (2001), China's urban society has been dealt with in detail by other works. Wenfang Tang and William L. Parish (2000) have analyzed national surveys in China to provide a portrait of changing life in Chinese cities. The articles in the collection edited by Thomas Gold, David Guthrie, and David Wank (2002) consider whether "guanxi" or interpersonal connections are growing less and less important as China moves toward an urban, market economy. The chapters in Martin King Whyte's (2003) book look specifically at the topic of how family relations have changed as China first transformed itself into a socialist society and then moved toward a market economy. Yusheng Peng (2004) considers how family relations affect China's economic transition, by examining how kinship solidarity and kinship trust have protected the property rights of entrepreneurs during China's rural industrialization. In looking at family relations, one of the major points of interest is what these changes mean for relations between older people and younger people. Thus, many of the basic questions of sociology, stemming from the work of theorists, such as Ferdinand Tönnies and Émile Durkheim, are likely to continue as matters of key interest for students of Asian studies into the foreseeable future.

Social change in Japan has received less attention from sociologists than social change in China. Japan went through its modernization much earlier than other Asian nations and is arguably in many respects more similar to the economically developed nations of Europe and North America. However, there is some sociological evidence that Japan is just beginning to resemble Europe and North America in values and behavior related to the family (see, e.g., Rindfuss et al. 2004).

Questions of political and social change have drawn the attention of social scientists working throughout Asia. Handy analyses of changes in specific countries can be found in the January/February 2004 issue of the journal *Asian Studies*, which provides country by country surveys of trends in individual countries throughout Asia. The rapid transformation of many of these nations has had particular consequences for relations between men and women. Consequently, as Asian societies have modernized, sociologists have shown a growing concern with

gender issues in those societies. For example, Jianghong Li's (2005) article in *Rural Sociology* looked at housework sharing among spouses and women's power and autonomy in Yunnan Province of China. In November 2004, the entire essay section of the review journal *Contemporary Sociology* was devoted to the rise of the women's movement in India.

If issues of modernization and urbanization are the major issues in Asian studies, those of social adaptation and ethnic identity have tended to dominate writing on Asians in America. Socioeconomic adaptation was one of the earliest and most persistent areas of research on Asian Americans. Among studies of socioeconomic adaptation, scholars have been concerned with explaining why different Asian groups adapt differently to the American economic environment (see Zhou and Bankston 1992), the role of ethnic communities and enclaves in shaping adaptation (see Zhou 1992; Zhou and Logan 1989), and how Asian Americans used small business ownership as a means of socioeconomic adaptation (see Min 1984; Yoon 1991), and whether Asian Americans are socioeconomically disadvantaged compared with the rest of the American population (Zeng and Xie 2004).

From the perspectives of both adaptation and ethnic identification, Asian American studies at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries focused heavily on youth. This was understandable, considering the rapid growth of the Asian American population. Education was a particular matter of concern. In works such as *Growing Up American: How Vietnamese Children Adapt to Life in the United States*, by Min Zhou and Carl L. Bankston III (1998), sociologists sought to account for the apparent relatively high rates of educational success of Asian American young people. Related to this issue, other sociologists concerned with youth in the Asian origin groups attempted to deal with the so-called model minority stereotype of Asians. This was the idea that Asians provide a model of achievement in education and economic life to which other American minority group members should aspire.

The topic of Asian religions in America began to attract growing attention as the new century began, and this topic will probably become a major area of research in Asian American studies. As Bankston and Zhou (1996) pointed out in one of the early studies of the new interest in Asian American religions, this is a topic that touches on both matters of adaptation and ethnic identification. Religious institutions often provide support networks to Asian groups in the United States and these institutions help adherents express and maintain ethnic identities. Key articles examining the role of religion in the lives of Asian Americans can be found in volumes by Tony Carnes and Fenggang Yang (2004) and by Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim (2001).

The marriage of Asians with non-Asians in the United States has received some attention from researchers.

Because this is a matter that is closely connected to both adaptation and ethnic identification, this will probably develop into an even more important field of inquiry in the future. Lee and Fernandez (1998) have also provided a useful examination of changing trends in Asian American intermarriage, although their comparison of 1980 to 1990 census data was already somewhat dated by the early years of the twenty-first century.

While Asian and Asian American studies emerged as distinct, although related, areas of study, a growing literature on transnationalism will probably bring the two more closely together over the next few decades. Although *transnationalism* remains a contested term in the context of Asian American literature, it is usually used to refer to the idea that immigrants to a new country do not cut ties with an older country but create linkages between the two or multiple countries. Further, it is used to highlight how relations of inequality cut across national boundaries. Along these lines, Yen Le Espiritu (2003) has offered a discussion of Filipino American life, based on interviews, that portrays Filipinos as moving between two countries and maintaining friendship and family ties in both. Among the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian Americans who arrived in the United States as refugees, transnationalism has often been found to have created worldwide ethnic communities (see, e.g., Carruthers 2002). Transnational connections among ethnic Chinese, throughout Asia and other parts of the world as well as in North America, have been a major area of Asian transnational research (Tseng 2002).

The Internet has arisen very recently as a means of transnational communication, creating fairly easy and continuous linkages across national boundaries. As the prominence of Internet contacts grows, more scholars will look at how this new technology maintains connections among members of national origin groups in North America and in Asia and how this shapes communities and politics in all locations. On this matter, Guobin Yang (2003) has looked at the growth of an online cultural sphere, in China and in America.

In future research, issues such as economic modernization and social change in Asia will probably be ever more closely linked to issues such as the ethnic identification of Asian immigrants and their descendants to other parts of the world and the social and economic adaptation of Asian immigrant groups to their new homelands. In terms of disciplinary structure within universities, Asian studies and Asian American studies will probably continue to be distinct programs and departments and may even grow more distinct in the future. Ironically, though, as transnational approaches and new emphases on global connections play a greater part in studies of international relations and international migration, the distinction between the sociological study of Asian nations and societies and the sociological study of Asian communities within North America is likely to become steadily weaker.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDIES

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It can be argued that the topic “criminal justice studies” does not belong in a handbook of sociology because criminal justice studies have little to do with the field of sociology. Indeed, with the development of criminal justice programs across the nation in the decades following the 1960s, criminal justice courses became competitive with sociology courses and many former sociology majors became criminal justice majors. But the fact still remains that sociologists wrote many of policing, courts, and corrections’ classic studies. Some of these studies were done before the concept of criminal justice studies even existed or were published in the early days of the development of the field of criminal justice. Examples of such sociological studies of policing were Wilson’s (1968) examination of the varieties of police behavior in a community; Skolnick’s (1994) discussion of the working personality of the police; Pound’s (1914) presentation of the value neutral nature of law; Quinney’s (1970) conflict analysis of law; Chambliss’s (1964) analysis of vagrancy law; Clemmer’s (1958) participant observation study of inmate culture at the Menard Correctional Center in Menard, Illinois; Sykes and Messinger’s (1960) depiction of the informal code of inmates in the Trenton Correctional Center; and Wheeler’s (1961) examination of prisonization in the Washington State Reformatory.

Another indicator of the influence of sociology on criminal justice studies is that in the last couple of decades, sociology of policing, sociology of law, and sociology of corrections courses are being taught, especially in upper division courses in sociology and criminology programs. Sociology of law curriculums were developed earlier than sociology of policing and corrections courses and are more

established, but sociology of policing and sociology of corrections courses are currently receiving greater attention. But the sociology of corrections approach is much more likely to look at the influence of contemporary social and political conditions than would traditional approaches to corrections. For example, current concerns include how the “make prisoners suffer” mood of the 1990s has affected corrections, and what are the consequences of the budgetary shortfalls of the post-2000 period. There is also a need to understand the nature of the disillusionment that exists among contemporary correctional practitioners such as what it has been affected by and how extensive it is (Bartollas 2004).

### SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO POLICE STUDIES

Sociological approaches to understanding the police can be divided into the following areas: the police as a formal organization, police and society, police culture, police and race, the role behavior of police officers, and police and the female police officer.

#### Police as a Formal Organization

The understanding of the bureaucratic nature of policing goes back to the writings of Max Weber ([1946] 1958). In drawing on Weber’s analysis of the basic components and rules of bureaucracies, scholars emphasize that police organizations are complex bureaucracies, which have budgets of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of dollars.

Edward R. Maguire (2003) has recently analyzed a number of elements of police bureaucracies: (1) the division of labor, (2) hierarchical structures and established chains of command, (3) impersonal organizational relationships, (4) universal standards, (5) entrance and advancement standards, (6) authority and responsibility, and (7) span of authority. Community ecology, which relates to how agencies are structured and operated, is another important consideration. Community ecology is affected by the size of the community served by an agency; the number of departmental employees; whether the agency is in a rural, urban, or suburban area; local crime problems; and the community's economic status. Finally, increased attention is being paid to the human side of police organizations—proactive versus reactive policing, alternative management styles, people processing versus people changing, and the development of culture.

## Police and Society

Democratic systems of government rest on a delicate balance between individual rights and collective needs. This balance, based on a long history of constitutional government, is weighted on the side of individual rights. As David Bayley (1977) states,

Government in the United States is created by communities to achieve certain limited purposes. Government is a created artifact and is distrusted. . . . Americans believe that the only way to restrain this power is to ensure that its agents do not exceed the authority of the law. (P. 224)

Claiming to be apolitical suggests that the police will not violate the power entrusted to them. But in practice police organizations are anything but apolitical in that the police function in a public political arena, and their mandate is politically defined. According to Manning (1997), there are three reasons why the police are involved in the political system. First, the vast majority of the police in the United States are locally controlled. The sheriff is typically an elected position, and municipal policing is embedded in the context of local political culture. Second, law is a political entity. The administration of criminal law encompasses political values and political ends. The police are tied to a political system that defines the law, itself a product of interpretations of what is proper and right from the perspective of powerful segments within the community. Third, because police uphold the law, individuals may lose various freedoms and even life itself (Manning 1997).

James Q. Wilson's (1968) classic study of styles of policing in a community describes how a particular police agency sees its purpose and the techniques that it uses to fulfill that purpose. He identified three styles of policing: (1) the watchman style, (2) the legalistic style, and (3) the service style. The watchman style of policing, according to Wilson, is primarily concerned with achieving the goal of "order maintenance." This style makes considerable use of

discretion, with its informal orientation sometimes taking a different approach in middle-class and lower-class communities. The legalistic style is committed to the full enforcement of the law. This style makes little use of discretion and, as much as possible, tries to eliminate it. Those who are involved in the service style of policing see themselves as helpers rather than as crime fighters.

Sociological studies of the police have emphasized the need for a new direction in policing, broadly termed "community policing." Community-oriented policing (COP) is also known as problem-oriented policing (POP), strategic policing, or neighborhood-oriented policing. This approach affirms the importance of police and citizens working together to control crime and maintain order and is committed to building strong relationships with institutions and individuals in the community (Goldstein 1990).

## Police Culture

The process of being introduced into the police culture is called socialization. Socialization usually takes place in three steps: the officer's initiation into the culture, the development of a working personality, and the acceptance of the informal system. This informal code fills the void that the formal system of regulations, policies, and procedures does not cover. The informal system is taught to young recruits through a variety of socializing experiences at the academy, while riding with a training officer, and when interacting with peers on a daily basis. Values of the police culture, such as loyalty and individualism, are reinforced due to the belief that the formal system does not adequately provide for the needs of the police officer. The informal system provides a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood that supposedly transcends racial, gender, and jurisdictional boundaries as represented by the slogan "the thin blue line." This type of solidarity is most evident when officers travel across state lines to share emotions at the funeral of a fallen officer.

The actual content of these informal rules varies among departments, but according to Skolnick (1994), "one underpinning of the police subculture is the belief among police officers that no one, i.e., management or the public understands them" (p. 44). Elizabeth Reuss-Ianni's (1983:13–16) study found that the culture of the New York City police included such maxims as "watch out for your partner," "don't give up another cop," and "getting the job done" (themes of solidarity); "protect your ass," "don't trust a guy until you have him checked out," "don't trust bosses to look out for your interests," and "don't make waves" (themes of isolationism) and "show ball," "be aggressive when you have to, but don't be too eager," and "civilians never command police" (themes of bravery). Malcolm K. Sparrow, Mark H. Moore, and David M. Kennedy's *Beyond 911* (1990) suggests that police culture includes at least six beliefs: (1) the police are the only real crime fighters, (2) no one understands the work of a police officer, (3) loyalty counts more than anything, (4) it is impossible to win the war on crime without bending the

rules, (5) the public is demanding and nonsupportive, and (6) working in patrol is the least desirable job in policing.

The degree to which these informal rules are accepted also varies across departments and even from one police officer to another. Officers who violate these informal rules risk having difficulties with fellow officers. These difficulties range from being the brunt of wise cracks and derogatory comments to being ignored by fellow officers or being transferred to another district or area of assignment. These informal norms serve to protect those who become involved in corruption or in the use of necessary force. The “blue curtain” or code of silence can be a firm barrier against administrative knowledge. It can also be exceptionally effective if it is perceived to involve an act that promises to tarnish all the good works that police officers do.

### Police and Race

Nicholas Alex’s (1969) classic study reveals the struggles of minority police officers to be accepted into the police culture. Alex’s examination of African American police officers in the New York City Police Department found that European American police officers were often accepting of African American officers at the workplace but typically excluded African American officers in other social settings. He also found that African American officers faced the problem of not being accepted by his or her race. He called this problem one of “double marginality” (Alex 1969:13–14).

Race and ethnicity further affect how individuals view the performance of the police. For example, the attitudes of European Americans are much more favorable than those of African Americans and Hispanic/Latino Americans toward the police. What generates so many negative feelings toward the police on the part of the poor, especially members of minority groups, is the way in which the police apply to them the heavy heel of the law. The police usually treat European Americans with respect, unless they push the police too far, but African Americans and Hispanic/Latino Americans too often experience violence and victimization. The sociological concept of racial profiling addresses this form of differential justice (Manning 1997).

### Role of Police Officers

The personality of the police, police corruption, police and the use of force, and stress and the police officer have received considerable attention through the years. Indeed, the bulk of the early writings, as well of contemporary writings on the police, have examined the role of police officers.

#### *The Personality of the Police*

The three key elements of Jerome Skolnick’s (1994) classic typology of personality are danger, authority, and efficiency. Danger is ever present due to officer’s continual

contact with the criminal element. Authority is essential to the working personality of the police, because the typical response of citizens is to deny recognition of authority. Thus, rookies learn early that the need to take charge of the situation requires using a forceful voice and maintaining a dominant stance. Efficiency is another important aspect of the working personality of the police. Skolnick contends that this demand for efficiency requires that police become craftsmen, thereby meeting the yardstick for performance placed on them by the department. In addition, it helps them feel good about maintaining order in the community.

#### *Police Corruption*

Police corruption is best understood not as deviance of individual officers but as group behavior guided by contradictory sets of norms linked to the organization that the erring individuals belong to, that is, organizational deviance. Even though police corruption is systemic, the individual equation still cannot be completely factored out. Corruption ranges from political favoritism for personal gain, ignoring crime, and accepting gifts for favors, to outright theft and extortion (Kappeler, Sluder, and Alpert 1994).

Although corruption has been a problem of varying degrees from the very beginning of policing in this nation, the widespread availability of drugs has increased the opportunity for wrongdoing. Officers assigned to drug enforcement units are constantly exposed to large supplies of drugs and cash. Patrol units also deal with the trafficking of drugs although not to the extent of specialized units (Kappeler et al. 1994).

#### *Police and the Use of Force*

The use of coercive force by peace officers has always been accepted as an inevitable part of the profession. According to Skolnick and Fyfe (1993), “Anybody who fails to understand the centrality of force to police work has no business in a police uniform” (p. 37). Justifiable use of force is often seen as illegitimate by some in the community, which leads to distrust, strained police-community relations, riots, and violence toward the police. But Skolnick and Fyfe (1993) propose that brutality has diminished in the past 50 years and even more so in the past 20 years stating, “We need to recall how much worse routine police brutality used to be” (p.18). An examination of the brutal nature of policing in the nineteenth century, court cases in the twentieth century that document the extensive use of third-degree police proceedings, and the 1931 Wickersham Commission’s findings about widespread brutality certainly support Skolnick and Fyfe’s thesis; police brutality has decreased in recent decades.

#### *Police and Stress*

Stress is a physical response to a perceived threat, challenge, or change and stressors represent anything in the



environment that can cause a stress response. The emotional reaction to the stressor(s) creates a physiological response, the effects of which depend on the coping mechanism of the individual (Mitchell and Everly 1993). The police officer is subject to high stress levels with daily hassles and occasional critical incidents representing the main sources of stress. Yet organizational stressors usually have greater impact on officers. In some departments, officers believe that they wear their armored vests for what they deal with inside the station rather than what occurs on the streets (Martelli, Waters, and Martelli 1989).

### **The Female Police Officer**

Susan Martin (1980) documented how female police officers experience difficulty in gaining acceptance in a traditionally white male occupation. Females are likely to become disillusioned because of their treatment, abuse, and sexual harassment by fellow officers. In addition, Martin found that sex-based discrimination occurs when it comes to promotions and job assignments.

The sociology of policing is also concerned with sexual harassment. Included in this discussion are legal protections involving the categories of law that cover sexual harassment in the workplace; an analysis of the courts' findings of sexual harassment, especially the reasonable woman standards; and the personal and departmental costs of sexual harassment. The wider context of sexual harassment involves patriarchal social, philosophical, and political systems in which women are subsumed under men. But the more immediate context is the male police culture. This is a culture, according to male officers, that demands dominance, aggressiveness, superiority, and power. It is commonly believed that the basic aspects of police work make it unsuitable for women (Fletcher 1995).

## **SOCIOLOGY OF LAW**

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The most dominant concern of the sociology of law focuses on consensus versus conflict perspectives toward the law. Early studies evaluated the efficiency and justice of the court process, and new developments examined by the sociology of law include critical legal studies, feminist legal theory, and critical race theory.

### **Consensus versus Conflict Perspectives toward the Law**

Roscoe Pound (1914) is considered to be one of the main proponents of the consensus perspective. According to this well-known legal scholar, society is viewed as composed of diverse groups whose interests often conflict with one another while still being in basic harmony. He considers certain interests as essential for the well-being of society, maintaining that the reconciliation between the

conflicting interests of diverse groups in society is essential to maintaining social order.

In marked contrast to the consensus perspective, the conflict view considers law as a "weapon in social conflict" (Turk 1978). From this perspective, the transformation of society is due to both group interests and differences in real power between groups. Diverse groups compete to have their interests protected through the formalization of their interests into law. On the basis of this idea, Richard Quinney (1970) argues that rather than being a device to control interests, law is an outgrowth of the inherent conflict between groups.

While many kinds of groups are involved in lawmaking, powerful groups have a substantial voice in the lawmaking process. For example, William J. Chambliss's (1964) study of vagrancy statutes illustrates the power of economic and commercial interests to influence legislation. He shows how the development of vagrancy laws paralleled the need of landowners for cheap labor during the period in England when the system of serfdom was collapsing. Vagrancy laws served (Chambliss 1964) "to force laborers (whether personally free or unfree) to accept employment at a low wage in order to insure the landowner an adequate supply of labor at a price he could afford to pay" (p. 69). Subsequently, vagrancy statutes were modified to protect commercial and industrial interests and to ensure safe commercial transportation.

### **Efficiency and Justice of the Court Process**

A number of studies have evaluated the efficiency and justice of the court process by examining the courtroom work group, the policy of plea bargaining, and the jury. In the following sections each of these areas is briefly discussed.

#### *The Courtroom Work Group*

David W. Neubauer (1974) states that five questions are important for understanding the decision making of prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges: Who makes the decisions? What standards are employed in making these decisions? How do the decision makers interact? How are the defendant's rights protected? Who benefits from the process? He also argues that the courtroom work group makes the decisions and the courthouse work group benefits from the court process, especially when plea bargaining is widely used.

The three principal actors of the courtroom work group are the judge, the defense attorney, and the prosecutor. The judge's role behavior in setting bail, negotiating a guilty plea, conducting the trial, making sentencing decisions, and becoming involved in correctional reform has received considerable attention. For example, Paul B. Wice's (1974) national survey of pretrial release found that an experienced judge generally develops a predetermined bail amount for each category of crime, but this does not

automatically result in a uniform bail-setting policy. Each judge has his or her own conception of the relative seriousness of various offenses: variations in judges' systems of values determine which particular crime appeared most offensive.

Wice (1978) has conducted a number of studies on the types of defense attorneys. He found that the starting salaries for public defenders were generally competitive with those offered by the district attorney's office but that the overall salaries paid to public defenders are still considerably lower than those of lawyers in private practice or corporate law. The typical private criminal lawyer, as revealed in Wice's study of private practice criminal lawyers in nine major cities, is aggressive and egotistical. These traits are believed necessary for effective courtroom performance and for establishing a workable lawyer-client relationship.

George Cole (1983) concludes from his study of prosecutors that three types of considerations affect the decision to prosecute: evidential, pragmatic, and organizational issues. Evidential elements refer to whether or not sufficient evidence exists to charge an individual with a specific crime. Pragmatic considerations, which have their origins in the prosecutor's joint responsibility to both the defendant and the society, require the prosecutor to evaluate factors such as the character of the defendant and the complainants, the effect of the case on the families of all the parties involved as well as on the community as a whole, and the mental and physical welfare of all parties. Organizational considerations refer to the internal institutional pressures that the criminal justice system exerts on the prosecutor.

### *Plea Bargaining*

Malcolm M. Feeley (1979) notes that "reliance on a single term such as plea-bargaining imposes a blanket of uniformity on a process in which great diversity and intensity in combativeness—short of trial—does in fact exist" (p. 29). Lynn M. Mather (1979) concurs, saying that criminal courts vary from one jurisdiction to the next in terms of frequency of plea bargaining, the dominance of the prosecutor or judge over plea bargaining, the stage at which plea negotiations are likely to occur, and whether the bargaining focuses on the charges or on the sentence. Martin A. Levin's (1977) study of sentencing in Minneapolis found that little reduction of charges occurred in Minneapolis. Indeed, in his sample, the original charge was reduced in only 7.9 percent of the cases. James Eisenstein and Herbert Jacob (1977) have also examined variations in plea bargaining in felony courts in Chicago, Baltimore, and Detroit. In Chicago, the plea depended on an agreement to a sentence; the offense charged usually did not change. But in Baltimore and Detroit, the plea more often involved a reduction in the offense charged or the selection of a lesser offense among those charged against the defendant.

### *Juries under Attack*

The selection of a jury is one of the most important aspects of a criminal trial. The jury system has been under attack in recent years, and it has been suggested that the jury should be replaced by a bench trial (i.e., a trial before a judge). The ideal size of a jury and the necessity of a unanimous decision are other issues of the jury system that have been widely debated. Another issue receiving discussion concerns freedom of the press, including cameras in the courtroom.

Harry Kalven and Hans Zeisel's (1966) *The American Jury*, the major work of the Chicago Jury Project, debunks a number of popular myths about a jury, such as (1) the jury does not understand what it is doing, (2) the jury is putty in the hands of a skilled lawyer, (3) juries are incompetent because of the low educational level of jurors, (4) one person often hangs a jury of 12 persons, (5) a sentimental display on the witness stand influences a jury, and (6) the jury is trigger-happy.

### **New Developments in the Sociology of Law**

Critical legal studies (CLS, also referred to as CRITS) is a new but controversial addition to the debate on law, legal education, and the role of lawyers in society (Bellotti 1992; Kramer 1995; Necsú 2000). Beginning with a group of junior faculty members and law students at Yale University in the late 1960s, it has spread across the nation. In 1977, CLS was organized into the Conference of Critical Legal Studies; this movement currently has over 400 members and holds an annual conference that draws more than 1,000 participants (Vago 2006).

Proponents of CLS reject the notion that there is anything unique or special about legal reasoning. Consistent with other forms of analysis, legal reasoning is unable to operate independently of personal biases of attorneys or judges. This approach sees law as so contradictory that it permits the context of a case to determine its outcome. The very nature of the contradictions and inconsistencies of law mean that judicial decisions are not as rational as is often assumed.

Feminist legal theory is another intellectual movement that has had considerable influence on the sociology of law. It focuses primarily on sex-based equality in the work place, reproductive rights, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and rape, just to mention a few. Feminist legal theory draws from the experiences of women and from critical perspectives developed in other disciplines to analyze the relationship between law and gender. Unlike critical legal studies, which started in elite law schools and were highly influenced by contemporary Marxism, feminist legal theories arose out of mass political movements (Rhode and Sanger 2005) concerned with issues such as the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment, continued sexual subordination and exploitation in the profession of law, setbacks with regard to abortion rights, and the prevalence

of sexism in society. It has also been influenced by the argument that “tough on crime” policies have had negative consequences for women, especially in the form of cuts in social services (Chesney-Lind and Pasko 2004a, 2004b; Miller 1998; Vago 2006).

A central tendency in feminist legal theories is to regard men within a patriarchal society as the source of women’s problems. One of the themes in feminist legal literature deals with women’s struggle for equality in a male-dominated legal profession and in the broader society. Another theme of feminist legal scholarship emphasizes how male bias influences practically every feature of law. The third dominant theme challenges the very concepts law invokes to support its contention that it is a just and fair institution (Vago 2006).

Critical race theory, a dynamic and growing movement in law, has more than 700 leading law review articles and at least a dozen books devoted to it (see, e.g., Ayres 2003; Delgado 2004). Much like feminist legal theory, critical race theory is concerned with questions of discrimination, oppression, equality, and the lack of diversity in the legal profession. The actual inception and formal organization of the movement can be traced to a 1989 workshop on Critical Race Theory in Madison, Wisconsin (Delgado 1994, 2004; Delgado and Stefancic 2002). Originally connected to critical legal studies and feminist jurisprudence, many of the proponents of the 1989 conference effectively ratified critical race theory as an important component of legal theory. The critical race theory movement attempts to rectify the wrongs of racism while acknowledging that racism is an inherent part of modern society. Proponents recognize that its elimination is impossible, but at the same time, they contend that an ongoing struggle to counter racism must be carried out (Vago 2006).

## SOCIOLOGY OF CORRECTIONS

Most sociological approaches to corrections have focused on sociological perspectives on the correctional system, the inmate world and how that social environment has changed.

### Sociological Perspectives on the Correctional System

The three major theoretical paradigms in sociology—functionalist perspective, conflict perspective, and interactionist perspective—influence the sociology of corrections. Functionalists and conflict theorists take a broad view, looking at “macro” or institutional issues of social life, while the interactionist perspective focuses on “micro” or interactional issues.

According to Gresham Sykes (1958), the structural-functional approach to the prison rests on a set of basic insights. First, it is argued that prison, like any other complex social system persisting through time, cannot be run

by the use of force alone, that some degree of voluntary cooperation on the part of those who are ruled is necessary. The problem then is how this cooperation can be obtained. Second, the rewards and punishments legally available to prison authorities are generally inadequate, as far as securing cooperation is concerned. Third, some degree of cooperation can be obtained—and usually is—by a system of illegal or forbidden rewards, such as guards ignoring the infraction of prison rules by inmates. Prisoners are allowed to engage in various forms of deviant behavior—ostensibly of a minor sort—in exchange for a peaceful institution. This pattern of the custodians breaking the rules for the sake of peace and order is part of an extensive pattern of “corruption” based on friendship and the innocuous encroachment on the guards’ duties by inmates.

Fourth, prisoners are faced with a number of psychological threats to their self-concept or sense of worth, which can reduce them to a state of childlike dependence or force them into homosexual liaisons. Fifth, much of the behavior of inmates can be interpreted as attempts, conscious or unconscious, to counter the problems and psychological threats created by the deprivations of prison life. Finally, it is claimed that the behavior patterns of inmates spring from a set of values, attitudes, and beliefs that find expression in the so-called inmates’ code. This code specifies a pattern of approved conduct, but it is an ideal rather than a description of how inmates behave.

The structural-functional model has contributed in turn to the development of the deprivation model and the importation model. According to Sykes (1958), the deprivation model views losses experienced by incarcerated inmates as part of the costs of imprisonment. The model describes prisoners’ attempts to adapt to the deprivations imposed by incarceration. The importation model suggests that influences prior to incarceration affect prisoners’ imprisonment.

Charles W. Thomas, in a study of a maximum-security prison in a southeastern state, concluded that integration of the deprivation and importation models was needed to understand the impact of the prison culture on an inmate. Thomas found that the greater the degree of similarity between a person’s preprison activities and the norms of the prison subculture, the greater was the person’s receptivity to the influences of prisonization. He also found that inmates who had the greatest degree of contact with the outside world had the lowest degree of prisonization (Thomas 1970, 1975).

### The Inmate World

In the Big House, as movies of the 1930s suggest, old “cons” informed new prisoners that the guards were in control and the inmates had to make the best of it. To make their time easier in the Big House, convicts developed their own social roles, informal codes of behaviors, and language. Gresham Sykes (1958:64–108) created a typology of these social roles: rats and center men, who hope to

relieve their pains by betrayal of fellow prisoners; gorillas and merchants, who relieve deprivation by preying on their fellow; prisoners, taking their possessions by force or the threat of force; wolves, punks, and fags, who engage in homosexual acts either voluntarily or under coercion to relieve the deprivation of heterosexuality; real men, who endure the rigors of confinement with dignity, as opposed to ball busters who openly defy authority; toughs, who are overtly violent, who will fight with anyone, strong or weak, and who “won’t take anything from anybody; hispters, who talk tough but are really “all wind and gumdrops.”

The social roles that prisoners, other than “real men,” chose to play provided ways to reduce the rigors of prison life at the expense of fellow prisoners. Convicts fulfilling the social role of the “real man” were loyal and generous and tried to minimize friction among inmates. To the extent that they succeeded, they fostered social cohesion and inmate solidarity. Sykes (1958:64–108) concluded that when cohesion was not achieved, and the rats, center men, gorillas, wolves, and toughs breached solidarity, prison life became “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

In the Big House, the informal inmate code of behavior was based on the following tenets (Sykes and Messinger 1960:6–8): Don’t interfere with inmate interests; Never rat on a con; Do your own time; Don’t exploit fellow inmates; Be tough; Be a man; Never back down from a fight; Don’t trust the “hacks” (guards) or the things they stand for. The inmate code was functional not only to prisoners but to prison administrators. The code promoted order because it encouraged each prisoner to serve his sentence instead of creating problems for himself and others. Prisoners understood that disorder within the walls would mean that informal arrangements between prisoner leaders and staff would be set aside and prisoners would lose privileges it had taken them years to attain. The code also protected the self-respect of inmates because they knew they were maintaining order not for the staff but for themselves. “Hacks” were the enemy, and a convict who was worthy made his animosity toward the enemy very clear.

Nevertheless, inmates and guards in the Big House knew that they depended on each other. Inmates maintained order and performed many of the tasks of running the institution. In turn, guards permitted inmates to violate certain rules and to gain privileges that were contrary to policy. What took place was an exchange. Staff and inmates accommodated each other’s needs while maintaining a hostile stance toward each other.

Donald Clemmer, who studied the Big House in his seminal study of Menard Prison in southern Illinois, claimed that the solidarity of the inmate world caused prisoners to become more criminalized than they already were. Clemmer (1958) coined the term *prisonization*, defining it as the “taking on in greater or lesser degree of the folkways, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary” (p. 299). He added,

Prisonization is a process of assimilation, in which prisoners adopt a subordinate status, learn prison argot (language), take on the habits of other prisoners, engage in various forms of deviant behavior such as homosexual behavior and gambling, develop antagonistic attitudes toward guards, and become acquainted with inmate dogmas and mores. (Pp. 299–300)

Clemmer’s emphasis was on the unique situation of the prison as a half-closed community composed of unwilling members under the coercive control of state employees. The prison was viewed as a closed system, despite the fact that staff and the prisoners brought elements of the outside culture into this world. Clemmer claimed that all convicts are prisonized to some extent and possibly as many as 20 percent are completely prisonized. He also argued that on release the highly prisonized offenders were likely to return to crime.

In their 1965 study of the Frontera Correctional Institution in California, David Ward and Gene Kassebaum (1965) found that women attempted to deal with the painful conditions of confinement by establishing homosexual alliances. These prison love affairs were described as unstable, short-lived, explosive, and based on the roles of “butch” and “femme.” The “butch” was the dominant role and the “femme” was the docile or female role.

However, Rose Giallombardo’s (1966) study of the federal Reformatory for Women at Alderson, West Virginia, indicated a major difference between male and female prisoners. With female inmates, membership in “fictive families” was more common than participation in homosexual activity. Giallombardo reported that the women at Alderson established familial relationships similar to their relationships in the free world. A sort of family life—with “mothers and fathers,” “grandparents,” and “aunts and uncles” was at the very center of inmate life at Alderson and provided a sense of belonging and identification that enabled inmates involved in “families affairs” to do easier time. Unlike male prisoners, the women at Alderson did not design a social system to combat the social and physical deprivations of prison.

Esther Heffernan’s (1972) research at the District of Columbia Women’s Reformatory in Occoquan, Virginia, also supported the hypothesis that fictive kinship structures are present in women’s prisons. Heffernan, along with Giallombardo, emphasized the concept of latent cultural identity as a factor leading to the formation of the fictive family. By this, she meant the preinstitutional identity that the female offender brings with her into the prison setting. Heffernan contended that women construct kinship structures because females are socialized to conceive of themselves, their needs, and their peer relationships chiefly in terms of family roles and situations.

## How the Inmate World Has Changed

John Irwin (1980) divides the recent history of the prison into the eras of the Big House, the correctional

institution, and the contemporary prison. This division provides a helpful outline for examining changes in, for instance, social roles, informal behavior norms, and social solidarity in inmate culture in U.S. prisons.

The so-called Big House dominated American corrections from the early twentieth century through the 1950s. In the Big House, prison populations exhibited considerable homogeneity. Most of the inmates were white, property offenders, and had spent several stints in prison during the course of their criminal career. "Convicts," as they were known then, developed a unified culture and kept their distance from the "hacks" or guards (Irwin 1980).

After World War II, correctional institutions replaced Big Houses in many states. The use of indeterminate sentencing, classification, and treatment represented the realization of the rehabilitative ideal. But as most staff knew and new prisoners quickly learned, the main purpose of the correctional institution was to punish, control, and restrain prisoners, with treatment playing only a minor role. The solidarity present among inmates of the Big House disappeared. Racial conflict developed, inmates saw themselves as political prisoners, and violence toward staff and other inmates took place on a regular basis (Irwin 1980).

James B. Jacobs's (1977) classic study of the Stateville Penitentiary in Illinois shows how much the external society influences what takes place within the prison. He describes the various external groups that entered Stateville that sought to influence the decisions made in this setting. More precisely, he documents how the black Muslims, street gangs from Chicago, and civil liberty and legal groups penetrated prisons in the 1960s and 1970s. But the basis of real transformation, he argued, came from the judicial review of prison administration and prison procedures.

Another change in the inmate world is found with the development of the prisoner radicalization movement. In the prisoner radicalization writings of the 1960s, which included Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver, and George Jackson, members of the lower class were perceived as political prisoners, victims of an unjust system of social control and economic relationships that "force" the poor into antisocial behavior. *Soledad Brother*, the prison letters of the late George Jackson, was a sacred document for the movement (Jackson 1970).

The sociology of corrections continues to this day to be concerned with the prisoner radicalization movement. Inmates involved with this movement can be divided into three groups. One group consists of those inmates who become radicals and attempt to incite large-scale institutional riots and other forms of institutional disturbance. Another group consists of those who go along with collective violence once it begins. The largest group of political prisoners consists of those who "talk the talk" of being political prisoners but are not foolish enough to become involved in violence toward the staff or the institution. They usually are members of a gang and believe that the

collective force of the gang provides some protection against the tyranny of staff and the state (Jones and Schmid 2000).

Today, in the era of the contemporary prison, the social order often verges on collapse; in fact, at times, the social order does collapse. Over the long term, however, this fragmented, tense, and violent setting remains intact because inmates ultimately prefer order to disorder (Irwin 1980). As one gang leader who was interviewed by the present author stated, "We're in control around here, if we wanted to, we could take the prison apart, but we choose not to. We've too much to lose" (Bartollas 1995).

The prison of the twenty-first century is a place of violence and disillusionment. Several factors account for the hopelessness that many inmates feel: the ever-increasing problem of idleness, longer sentences, tighter controls imposed by staff, overcrowding, the decline of political ideology, more lockdown time and fewer privileges, and the reduced possibility of relief through the judicial process.

## PROSPECTUS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The sociology of law will likely see increased interest in critical legal studies, feminist legal theory, and critical race theory. Within the next decade or two, both the sociology of policing and the sociology of corrections will be better grounded in social theory and research and, like the sociology of law, will be well established in the discipline. Thus, policing and corrections, which were influenced so much in their early days of development by sociological research will come full circle and become much more sociologically oriented. Major developments will likely include community-based models in the sociology of policing and growing attention in the sociology of corrections to the social dynamics, which contribute to the humane care of offenders.

The growing concern with community-based models in policing and more humane conditions in correctional facilities may have important, long-term policy implications for how we deal with crime in the American society. The more that police officers are situated in the community, the more likely they will see themselves as serving the needs of the community and will pursue proactive and preventative means of enforcement.

The movement toward more humane care of offenders, particularly those sentenced to long-term institutions, is very much needed. The "make prisoners suffer" approach that was prevalent throughout the United States during the 1990s and "get tough with prisoners" policy actually changed the philosophy of imprisonment from that of depriving inmates of their freedom to punishing inmates. An alternative approach is, however, both possible and feasible through proactive management philosophy and techniques emphasizing the humane treatment of staff and inmates.

## GAY, LESBIAN, AND QUEER STUDIES

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In their relatively recent but flourishing history, lesbian and gay studies have moved rapidly through a series of major transformations. Defining a core or boundaries to this body of knowledge is no easy undertaking. Gay and lesbian studies, like the communities and movements associated with them, were perhaps least problematic as a term sometime in the 1980s. Since then, *gay* and *lesbian*, which were disputed names even as they gained widespread currency in the 1960s and 1970s, have been challenged by such terms as *bisexual*, *transgender*, and *queer*. A leading journal in the field calls itself *GLQ* to try to avoid the charge of exclusivity. Yet all these words taken together still do not capture the full range of interests and topics pursued by scholars who write about the many manifestations of sexual and emotional connection, in their social and cultural contexts, that fall outside the heterosexual realm. Two-spirited aboriginal people, historical romantic friendships, and acolyte-mentor relationships are but a few of the topics that go beyond the categories but nevertheless draw together a great many researchers and theorists into communication with each other about how gender, sexuality, identity, power, and culture “work.” Gay and lesbian studies have arisen in the various disciplines of the social sciences and humanities, in professions such as law and business, and in such natural sciences as biology. They have also provided the opportunity for vigorous interdisciplinary dialogues and networks among scholars as well as cultural workers located in communities.

Perhaps what gives some sense of commonality to these many endeavors is their opposition to the study of

homosexuality that preceded them. The Cold War era of the 1950s was occupied almost entirely by a set of ideologies intent on annihilating homosexual desire and its social formations (Adam 1995). Whether in legislatures, courts, churches, universities, or the mass media, talk of homosexuality, if permitted at all, turned on the question of whether it was sin, sickness, or crime. Scholarly debate, along with public discussion, largely addressed the issue of which tools of repression would prove most effective: psychiatry, law enforcement, or religious indoctrination (Terry 1999). Gay and lesbian studies, then, emerged as an effort to decolonize science by breaking the pathology paradigm and wresting the stories of homosexual experience from the monopoly of the social-control professions.

This transition in thinking from the 1950s to the 1970s exists in a yet larger historical context that merits consideration. The desire to document and celebrate the lives of people with homoerotic expression is as lengthy as literacy itself. Ancient recorded epics, such as the Babylonian *Gilgamesh*, the Greek *Symposium*, and the Roman *Satyricon*, contain central narratives of male sexual friendship, as do some of the oldest surviving texts of China, India, Persia, and Japan. Literacy has been much less available to women, but when nuns were first schooled in writing, female passion soon came into view as well (Murray 1996). From the late nineteenth century until 1933, Germany became a center of scholarship, most notably Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Science, itself just one element of a large and flourishing gay and lesbian culture (Berlin Museum 1984; Schwules Museum

und Akademie der Künste 1997). Prewar Germany was the site of new novels, drama, and art on gay and lesbian subjects and of the first surveys and academic treatises on the biology, anthropology, and history of homosexuality. The Nazi regime obliterated this first wave of gay and lesbian studies. By the 1950s, only a few lone pioneers in Europe and North America worked against tremendous odds to rediscover what had become “hidden from history” (Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey 1989).

The gay and lesbian studies of the 1970s, then, were something of a “second wave” like second-wave feminism. Also like women’s studies, gay and lesbian studies became possible only because of the larger social climate of change characterized by the so-called new social movements of the 1960s. Movement and knowledge-creation were indistinguishable in a period when civil rights, women’s, and gay and lesbian movements sought to take back public and scholarly images and stories about themselves. Like the socialist and national liberation struggles that aimed to break the ideologies that legitimated the subordination of workers and of colonized peoples in Asia and Africa, the new social movements worked to refound science in ways that better expressed their own experiences. The participants in all these new knowledge projects thought of themselves as engaged in consciousness-raising and liberation by challenging social exclusion and creating the tools of self-empowerment.

Debates in gay and lesbian studies were the debates of movement thinkers about who we are and what we want. Key texts written by Jill Johnston, Adrienne Rich, and Mary Daly functioned as manifestos calling lesbians to act on a new vision of a women-centered society free of patriarchal domination. Similarly, Dennis Altman and Guy Hocquenghem postulated new utopias of free-floating desire unhampered by homosexual and heterosexual identities and boundaries. Gay and lesbian writing was struggling out of a long period of censorship and outright suppression. The promise of liberation was allowing people to glimpse the possibility of a new world free of prejudice and to dream of radically rearranged societies where people could explore new options in loving and living together.

## TRANSITIONS IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY

There are a good many social and cultural factors that shaped the new lesbian and gay studies in the last quarter of the twentieth century. Shifts in the sociohistorical environment of the period, reorganization of movement groups and strategies, and new intellectual trends all contributed to a thorough and ongoing rethinking of studies of sexuality and gender. Over time, gay and lesbian movements, like the other new social movements around them, moved away from confrontation and radicalism (Adam 1995). Part of this has to do with the colder political climate of the

neoconservative governments of the 1980s, embodied especially in the Thatcher and Reagan administrations, where reform movements and their constituencies were pressed into a more defensive posture in the face of global capitalism. Part of these changes also has to do with a modicum of success won, especially in advanced, industrial nations, through the attainment of basic antidiscrimination laws and the consolidation of social spaces resistant to police repression. The political strategies that proved most viable in liberal, democratic societies were typically civil rights arguments reliant on judicial and legislative reform. Lesbian and gay politics became somewhat more “domesticated,” or perhaps “mature,” through integration into conventional political channels, and homosexuality tended to become constructed as a minority, parallel to ethnic minorities, in contrast to the gay liberation image of homoerotic desire as a potential in everyone.

The emergence of the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s emboldened antigay forces to try to roll back newly acquired citizenship rights, but perhaps paradoxically, AIDS also led to new alignments between (some) governments and gay and lesbian communities as AIDS service organizations were brought into health and social service systems and thus into further integration in mainstream state systems (Adam 1997; Altman 1988).

Commercialization also blunted liberationist rhetoric. Gay and lesbian worlds flourished in the post-Stonewall United States and in the European Union, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, anchored often by commercial establishments, such as bars and discos. Over the years, the growing size of Pride celebrations attracted the interest of major corporations, who came to view gay and lesbian communities as underexploited sources of consumer buying power. The overtly political gay and lesbian press of the 1970s faded away as slick commercial magazines promoting fashionable and expensive “gay lifestyles” came to the fore. This more depoliticized and consumerist environment emboldened a new class of conservative commentators both inside the gay press and in the mainstream media.

In this environment, then, the liberationist project lost sustenance and direction. In his 1990 review of the state of gay and lesbian studies in the United States, Jeffrey Escoffier (1998) lamented the growing disconnection between community and movement politics as the field began to migrate into the academy. A great deal of the new gay and lesbian studies of the 1960s and 1970s grew out of the excitement of discovering a lost history, so much so that early conferences subsumed all other research under the “history” label. A wide range of people from inside and outside the academy turned up at the New York conferences of the Gay Academic Union in the mid-1970s to report on their findings, and many of these findings found their way into gay and lesbian community newspapers. At that time, even professional scholars pursued gay-related research “to the side” of their regular work for fear that it would be seen as more stigmatizing than creditable inside

universities. But the struggle of lesbian and gay caucuses inside such disciplinary associations as the American Sociological Association in the 1970s and 1980s succeeded in creating space inside the academy, and more and more work in the area began to emerge from students and researchers in the universities.

## THE EMERGENCE OF LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES

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Ken Plummer's (1992) review of lesbian and gay studies in Europe and North America marveled at the array of conferences, journals, and bookstores that had sprung up over two decades. Psychologists were displacing the homosexuality-as-sickness view with new investigations into *homophobia*, the irrational prejudice directed against homosexual practices and peoples. Sociologists, anthropologists, and historians were unsettling biological models of sexuality by showing how desire is deeply shaped by cultural context and how pet notions concerning "the natural," "the moral," and "the desirable" are peculiarly ethnocentric. Literary critics were exposing histories of censorship and distortion that had suppressed homoeroticism in novels, movies, and biographies.

Gay and lesbian studies were also changing as a result of internal dilemmas and philosophical currents that affected other philosophies of change such as Marxism, feminism, and postcolonialism. As enthusiastic researchers went out to rediscover gay and lesbian history, they first looked for people much like themselves, only to discover that same-sex desire and relationships took often unfamiliar forms in other eras and cultures. This initial belief in a discoverable homosexual throughout history and around the world came to be known as *essentialism* (Boswell 1989). Out of the dilemmas of essentialism came a scholarship that sought to understand how (homosexual) desire arose and was lived through in very different social and historical environments. This *social constructionist* view was perhaps best expressed in the work of Jeffrey Weeks inside gay and lesbian studies and by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) outside. In a groundbreaking trilogy founded in British history, Weeks (1977, 1981, 1985) showed the complex weave of social, historical, and semiotic currents that produced modern conceptions of what homosexuality is. Although same-sex sexual and emotional connections can be documented in many different societies and historical periods, the modern sense of homosexuality as an identity and a people is a relatively recent development.

Despite important differences in philosophical approach and genealogy, social constructionism tended to be identified as well with the work of Michel Foucault (1978) who treated the ways in which sexuality, and knowledge about sexuality, existed within regulatory regimes that give it shape and meaning. For Foucault, modern gay and lesbian identities and movements could

scarcely be simply about "liberation" because they built on the "homosexual" category, an invention of Western societies to police and contain desire. At the same time though, many of Foucault's followers have forgotten his view that the politics of sexual identities is not just about limitation but also about the generation of new pleasures and ways of living. This dilemma—or perhaps better said, dialectic—continues to fuel debates among scholars and activists who want either to build up or to tear apart "gay" and "lesbian" categories (Gamson 1998). Perhaps ironically, the *personal is political* credo of the liberationists was a stimulus for the Foucaultian revolution in social theory. It became increasingly difficult through the 1970s and 1980s to postulate an essential homosexual waiting to be liberated, just as Marxian ideologies ran aground with claims of an unsullied, militant, working class about to spring forth, ready to effect a socialist revolution if only "false consciousness" could be punctured. Just as feminists began interrogating just what the category of *women* means in the face of critiques by lesbians, women of color, working class women, and third world women, just what it is that unifies gay men or lesbians seemed increasingly difficult to discern. This *deconstruction* of core categories became a major academic industry in the 1990s, identified in social theory with *postmodernism* and in lesbian and gay studies with *queer theory*.

## THE RISE OF QUEER THEORY

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By the 1990s, *liberation* had given way to *transgression* as a leading project, and gay and lesbian studies had grown immensely, fragmented, and changed direction. Queer theory, set in motion by the pioneering work of Judith Butler (1990) and Eve Sedgwick (1990), strongly reinvigorated work in gay and lesbian studies (or perhaps, one should now say, queer studies), set a new course for the area, and resulted in a wave of innovative, critical publications. Queer theory stepped back from the study of homosexuality to the question of how people and desires come to be separated into the two camps of homosexuality and heterosexuality in the first place. Sharing with deconstruction an interest in discovering the underpinnings of linguistic binaries such as homosexual-heterosexual, male-female, and white-black, queer theory proposed to delineate the regulatory regimes that sort sexualities and subjectivities into valued and devalued categories. The promise of queer theory was to move beyond the minoritizing logic of the study of a gay and lesbian "ethnicity" toward an understanding of the ways in which heterosexuality and family pull the cloak of virtue around themselves by manufacturing a deviant *other* into which a great many people can be dumped and dismissed. A good deal of insightful work on the ways in which heterosexual masculinity constructs itself by simultaneously exploiting and denying its homoerotic impulse has emerged from this perspective. Mark Simpson's (1994) provocative essays have



exposed ways in which the simultaneous reliance on, and denial of, homoeroticism among men informs everything from football to action movies, even though he is perhaps not an “official” queer theorist. In a send-up of the British “new lad,” Simpson (1999) observes how the quest for masculinity inevitably involves large doses of male bonding and “an exhausting schedule of boozing, shagging babes and fighting over football scores which is, in part, a hysterical attempt to ward off any suggestion of poovery and keep the homo tag at bay” (pp. 8–9).

Queer theory encouraged analysis not only of the overtly homosexual but also a reading between the lines for patterns of absences and silences through which texts deny same-sex desire. It revealed how the manufacture of a reviled “homosexual” in Western societies has often been a method by which “heterosexuality” and “family” assured themselves of their superiority, rather like the way racism has loaded repugnant attributes onto people of color to justify the privileges of white people. Queer theory hoped, as well, to jump the traces of gay/lesbian categories by embracing other outlaws from the patriarchal family, often by celebrating boundary crossers such as transgendered people and bisexuals. In one sense, queer theory recaptured a radical moment associated with gay liberation in its affirmation of the widespread nature of homoerotic desire and the artificiality of the homosexual-heterosexual division.

So strong has been the vigor of queer theory that Lisa Pottie (1997) discerned a trend toward the “selling” of queer theory as a fashionable new commodity among academics and students, at least in English departments receptive to cultural studies. On the other hand, reports out of other disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences show more skepticism regarding support for scholarship in the area, where gay, lesbian, and queer studies eke out an existence as an avocation of scholars hired to do other things (Duggan 1995; Taylor and Raeburn 1995; Weston 1996).

## Intersections with Sociology

The study of sexuality has tended to be a relatively marginal part of sociology textbooks and curricula, and the representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) peoples and cultures has been even more peripheral, despite their popularity among students and currency in the media. The low profile of lesbian, gay, and queer studies in sociology texts is all the more surprising given the significance of sociologists and sociological thinking to theoretical developments in the study of gender and sexuality, and many significant contributions made by them in developing the area.

Sociological work has often been in close dialogue with parallel and overlapping work by historians and anthropologists who share interests in documenting the lives of non-heterosexual people, tracing the evolution of identity and community or comparing the social construction of sexual

patterns in different societies around the world. Perhaps the earliest known example of sociological ethnography is Maurice Leznoff and William Westley’s (1998) “The Homosexual Community” which began as an M.A. thesis and appeared as an article in 1956 in *Social Problems*. It treated the largely subterranean social networks of gay men in Montreal at a time when homosexuality was subject to criminal penalty. Sociological treatments of gay and lesbian topics did not emerge in any sustained way until the mid-1970s, following the momentous social changes of the 1960s, marked symbolically in the history of the gay and lesbian movement by the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 (Adam 1995). In 1976, a group of faculty and graduate students gathered in a hotel room at a meeting of the American Sociological Association to found the Sociologists Gay Caucus (later Sociologists Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Caucus) (Murray 2004). It is also in 1976 that a division in sexual behavior (later sexual behavior, politics, and community) formed in the Society for the Study of Social Problems. In this period, new work appeared that laid out leading themes pursued by sociologists in subsequent years: surveys of sexual behavior, phenomenological and interactionist accounts of living gay in a homophobic world, reflections on the dynamic growth and historical evolution of gay and lesbian communities, ethnographies of those communities, and examination of social movements and their impacts on the societies around them. Since the 1980s, these concerns were supplemented by studies of the emerging AIDS epidemic, relationships and family building, and the diversity of homosexual and bisexual experiences in terms of ethnocultural communities in Western societies, (trans)gender variations, and societies in the global South.

Two early surveys were carried out in the United Kingdom in the 1960s (Schofield 1965; Westwood 1960); then Martin Weinberg and coinvestigators in the United States sketched the basic parameters through surveys of gay men in the 1970s (Bell and Weinberg 1978; Weinberg and Williams 1974) and subsequently of bisexuals of both genders (Weinberg, Williams, and Pryor 1994). Edward Laumann et al. (1994) produced one of the very few, authoritative surveys of sexual behavior across the United States since Kinsey but did so against tremendous odds as Christian Right lobbyists succeeded in blocking research funding for sex-related work. Laumann et al. measured homosexuality along three dimensions—as desire, behavior, and identity—each of which produced a divergent profile of same-sex inclination.

The pioneering work of John Gagnon and William Simon (1973) in sexuality studies was confirmed in some of the foundational works of the 1970s. Ken Plummer’s (1975) *Sexual Stigma* questioned naturalist accounts of sexuality by drawing on symbolic interaction to counter the dominance of both biomedical and deviance rhetorics. Barry Adam’s (1978) *The Survival of Domination* sought to disentangle the subjectivity of inferiorization from the language of pathology so frequently used to stigmatize the

experience of subordinated people. And Henning Bech's (1997) *When Men Meet*, first published in Danish in 1987, explored the phenomenology of homoerotic sensibility. More recently, Didier Eribon's (2004) *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* draws on a French cultural grounding to explore similar themes.

Sociologists examined the momentous changes of the last quarter of the twentieth century through periodic soundings of the state of lesbian and gay communities (Murray 1996; Plummer 1981, 1992; Seidman 2002) and analysis of the tumultuous sex debates among feminists and gay and lesbian activists (Seidman 1992; Stein 1997). There has never been a straightforward relationship between identity and behavior as a great many people "experiment" with affective and sexual connection with people of their own sex while avoiding or resisting the implication that they "are" gay, bisexual, or lesbian. Taking on gay identity and identification with LGBT communities have themselves been influenced by the changing status of LGBT people in the societies in which they live and by the availability of LGBT social spaces. Richard Troiden's (1988) *Gay and Lesbian Identity* examined how people come to adopt identities, while later work, especially influenced by the queer theory preoccupation with "fluidity," documented mobility through variable identities (Rust 1995, 2000; Whisman 1996).

Since Leznoff and Westley's early ethnography, several studies have offered snapshots of particular scenes, networks, and community facets. Carol Warren's (1974) *Identity and Community in the Gay World* portrayed a small network of gay men without falling back on the prevailing psychiatric and pathologizing language of the day. Laud Humphreys's (1975) *Tearoom Trade* tends to be remembered now more for its audacious methodology than for its documentation of the vast hidden world of intermale sexual contact or its innovation of the concept of the "breastplate of righteousness" to describe those who cover their own unconventional behavior with the bluster of conventional moral rectitude. Other work has documented the formation and development of lesbian friendship networks (Dunne 1997; Krieger 1983) and innovative cultures of masculinity among gay men (Levine 1998; Nardi 2000).

The rising preoccupation of the 1990s and 2000s with the legal recognition of same-sex relationships (Adam 2003, 2004; Bernstein 2001) has increasingly placed the formation of intimate relationships on the forefront of the public agenda and influenced the direction of research as well. Phillip Blumstein and Pepper Schwartz (1983) wrote the landmark study on relationships comparing married and unmarried heterosexual and homosexual couples regarding the ways in which they manage money, sex, and power, sketching a complex pattern of similarity and difference among the four categories. Kath Weston's (1991) anthropological study of relationship formation among San Francisco lesbians and gay men dispensed with implicit comparisons with the nuclear family in favor of an ethnography of kinship formations properly indigenous to

LGBT communities. Sociologists have been among the members of several disciplines interested in lesbian parenting (Arnup 1995; Nelson 1996), often, at least implicitly, testing the moralist hypothesis that only nuclear families can raise healthy children, sometimes underplaying the differences evident in children raised by lesbian (and less often, gay male) parents as differences are so often read as shortcomings among people continually measured against heterosexist norms (Stacey and Biblarz 2001). The exploration of LGBT households inevitably addresses feminist claims that patriarchal family systems are neither necessary nor desirable and that alternative intimate arrangements can work. Other research challenges the preeminence of the couple by giving greater recognition to friendship networks (Nardi 1999; Roseneil and Budgeon 2004). Christopher Carrington (1999) cautions that same-sex households can scarcely ignore gender as they work out their own divisions of household labor, and Janice Ristock (2002) shows that they can be vulnerable to domestic abuse, but overall LGBT communities have been crucibles of relationship innovation displaying a remarkable diversity of viable forms that continue to challenge the patriarchal foundations of contemporary law (Weeks, Heaphy, and Donovan 2001).

While inquiry into homophobia has changed shape over time, it has scarcely faded away. Rabidly antigay subcultures flourish in most high schools, producing the major class of perpetrators of antigay violence (Comstock 1991). In the United States since 1977, local referenda have been used, election after election, to repeal antidiscrimination legislation, and since 1995, a majority of the states along with the national Congress have succumbed to a panic over "gay marriage," banning the legal recognition of same-sex relationships. The ability of the Christian right to construct a sometimes winning ideology around the idea of an effete, moneyed homosexual class demanding special rights in opposition to God-fearing, family-oriented, patriotic Americans continues to demand analytic strategies that deconstruct the cultural coordinates of these ideologies and understand the social forces that keep such ideologies in operation.

Laud Humphreys (1972) wrote one of the first significant books on the gay liberation movement. Sociological work has long sought to identify the social forces that generate collective identity and collective mobilization. Accounting for the social environment that generates both homophobia and movements resistant to it was a central concern of Barry Adam's (1995) *The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement* and Gary Kinsman's (1996) *The Regulation of Desire*, both originally published in the mid-1980s. Inspired by Stuart Hall's analysis of the ideological shifts of the 1980s, Anna Marie Smith (1994) examined how racist and homophobic campaigns served the ends of the neoliberal tide engineered in part by the Thatcher administration in the United Kingdom. Subsequent work has delved into the dynamics of particular lesbian movement groups (Ross 1995), of the antigay opposition (Stein

2001), and of struggles over inclusion of sexual orientation in hate crimes legislation (Jenness and Grattet 2001). Many social movements are both local and global phenomena, and gay and lesbian movement groups have continued to spring up in disparate societies around the world, raising larger sociological questions of how global changes in political economy, kinship, and intimacy lead to the parallel emergence of transnational mobilizations (Adam, Duyvendak, and Krouwel 1999).

Gay, lesbian, and queer studies have been one resource for understanding how AIDS has been manufactured as a moral and political entity in contemporary societies (Adam and Sears 1996; Altman 1986; Epstein 1996; Levine, Nardi, and Gagnon 1997; Watney 1987). Sociological perspectives ought to be fundamental to making sense of how people with HIV disease come to be constructed as a national threat subject to detention at the borders of the United States (Patton 1990) or how people make sense of sexuality and form intimate relationships, thereby making themselves vulnerable to HIV transmission. Safer sex practices can scarcely be understood apart from what people think and feel about sex, how it is a means of communication with others, and the ways in which people make sense of sexual discourses circulating in society, yet sociology and gay-lesbian studies have remained relatively marginal to the biomedical research establishment, which occupies HIV-related research, including its “psychosocial” aspects. Nevertheless, sociologists have made some notable contributions to HIV research since the articulation of a sociological research agenda at a San Francisco meeting of the American Sociological Association (Huber and Schneider 1991). Especially noteworthy has been work on how HIV-positive people deal with the difficulties imposed by the society around them (Adam and Sears 1996; Kayal 1993; Stoller 1998; Weitz 1991) and how HIV disease was taken up by a wide range of social actors from activists to professionals, transforming it from an entirely unknown entity into a series of scientific and social objects (Epstein 1996; Levine et al. 1997; Stockdill 2003).

## RECENT, CURRENT, AND FUTURE TRENDS

Sociologists have been among the contributors to ethnographic studies of same-sex relations and network formation in societies around the world, a central focus of much anthropological work. Two encyclopedic overviews (Greenberg 1988; Murray 2000) of cross-cultural variability raise fundamental questions regarding the structural locations that give rise to homoerotic attraction and the ways in which societies structure the resultant relationships, variously integrating, ignoring, or repressing them. The complex interaction of social relations of production and distribution, kinship, and family formation create the social context in which same-sex relationships come to be valued or sanctioned, and there is still more work to be

done in understanding how these social systems work. In recent years, the intersections of race, gender, nation, and sexuality have come to the fore as significant sites of making sense of the many ways in which people live out same-sex relations, imagine identity, find social space, and move between cultures (Carrillo 2002; Crichlow 2004; Schluter 2002; Sullivan and Leong 1995).

Today, writing about transgendered people is challenging pathology paradigms, much as gay and lesbian studies did in the 1970s, and sociologists are participating in a much larger wave of new scholarship recognizing the culture of drag (Rupp and Taylor 2003), and documenting the challenges of living transgendered in everyday life (Namaste 2000).

While queer theory has generated a new scholarship in the humanities, its effect in sociology has been more tangential. At one level, queer theory's interest in performativity, deconstructing gender, and exposing the fragility of the “natural” arrived as “old news” in sociology, for which these ideas are in many ways the stock-in-trade. At another level, queer theory displayed a number of limitations, at least when viewed through a sociological lens: Its preoccupation with public texts as privileged expressions of the real, its apparent disinterest in state and capital, its seeming disengagement from the struggles of LGBT movements, all appeared to be at odds with social research currents. Still, sociology has perhaps been too immune from queer theory's sharp eye for irony, contradiction, and moral binaries, and insufficiently willing to examine its own complicity with heteronormativity (Seidman 1996).

## Public Sociology and Social Policy

With the collection of many of the key texts of lesbian, gay, and queer studies in sociology in Peter Nardi and Beth Schneider's (1997) *Social Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Studies* and the founding of a section in the American Sociological Association on the sociology of sexualities in 1997, there is consolidation of an institutional framework for further development of the area. The challenge today is to bring the tools of sociological analysis to bear on a series of enduring issues: identifying sources and reproduction mechanisms of homophobia (Adam 1998), working with the indigenous cultural forms of LGBT communities in building those communities, documenting and learning from diversity in one's own society and abroad, and contributing further to reflections on who we are and what we want to become. LGBT issues have taken a central role in the public agenda of many countries around the world in recent decades. The ability of LGBT people to become fully enfranchised citizens remains contested in many societies. At a time when the opponents of equality know nothing of the lives of LGBT people and seek to limit them to a subordinate status, sociology can have a role in the courts, in public policy forums, and in civil society, speaking to the reality of those lives. When

many pseudosociological claims circulate in the public realm to justify the subordination of sexual and racial minorities, sociologists can and should bring their knowledge to bear on such questions as the kinds of family forms that make up the “building blocks” of society, the social

consequences of legal decisions that enforce unequal access to public services, the ways religious authorities legitimate violence against real people, and how homophobic ideologies can have health consequences in suicide and disease transmission.

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## NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

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While no clear date for the beginning of Native American Studies exists, it might be argued that such studies began with the Charter of 1650, which established Harvard University to educate both Indian and English youth (Morison 1936:355). The scholarly study of Native Americans begins much later, however, and departments of American Indian Studies first began to emerge during the early 1970s as Native American Studies programs began to separate from other departments. While Thornton (1998) addresses the nature and development of Native American Studies, Champagne and Stauss (2002) discuss the development of such programs in colleges and universities, and Wax (1971) highlights the sociological study of Native Americans as a part of ethnic studies.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century there are 41 institutions that offer a four-year degree in Native American Studies. In 1969, the University of Minnesota became the first program to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree, and as noted by Thornton (1998:88), graduate programs in the area include a master's degree program at UCLA, First Nation's Studies at the University of Northern British Columbia, a Ph.D. program at the University of Arizona, an area of emphasis at the University of California, Davis, a Ph.D. in ethnic studies with a concentration of American Indian Studies, and a Ph.D. in American Studies at the University of Minnesota with a possible focus on Native American Studies (Thornton 1998:90).

While sociologists have studied the Red Power Movement, treaty violations, and a variety of environmental

issues and archaeologists have examined many long-forgotten indigenous tribal societies, the focus of contemporary Native American Studies/American Indian Studies/First Nations Studies is now to offer an indigenous people's perspective on what has become of contemporary American Indian life. Unlike more traditional minority studies programs in sociology or archaeology, Native American Studies/American Indian Studies/First Nations studies, both in the United States and Canada, are multidisciplinary. Rather than offering a traditional academic approach, Kidwell and Velie (2005) suggest these aforementioned programs intentionally focus on literature, history, arts, language, land and identity, and tribal sovereignty (Kidwell and Velie 2005:7–15). The University of California, Berkeley, the University of Minnesota, the University of California at Davis, and the University of British Columbia are among the increasing number of institutions that offer excellent graduate programs in Native American Studies (Thornton 1998:90; see also Appendix 48.1 at the end of this chapter).

The relevance of traditional academic approaches to the Native American experience has led to the development of a different academy. Native American studies purposively combine a unique analysis of the Native American people that reflects their arts, values, and cultural traditions. Duane Champagne (1998) suggests that the small number of these programs may be limited only by the relatively small number of faculty available to teach in these programs. One obvious strength of such programs is that they offer both Indian and non-Indian students an alternative interpretation of history, law, policy, and culture that would

not otherwise be available (Champagne 1998:185). The 36 tribal colleges that offer educational opportunities are listed in Appendix 48.2. While the number of these programs is limited, the learning opportunities that are provided by them are vast.

## DISCOVERY OF NATIVE AMERICAN SOCIETIES

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The history of the Native Americans in North America is about 500 years old, but this knowledge dates from the “discovery” of America by Europeans. For most who study the history of the “New World,” it begins in 1492. Had history been written from the point of view of Native Americans, the year 1492 would be a point in history that forever changed their way of life. The native tribes, of course, were here long before their discovery. In fact, the Anasazi or “Ancient Pueblo” people of the Colorado River region of the American Southwest are now well documented to have preceded the Navaho and Apache tribes of this same region. These ancient Pueblo, or Anasazi, are now known to have migrated from Mexico into the Southern Arizona region about 3,000 years ago and to have introduced maize (corn) cultivation to this region. Settlements are known to exist at Cahokia, Moundville, Alabama, and Natchez, Mississippi existed long before 1492. The Siouan, the Algonquian, and the Iroquoian, in addition to many others, developed great societies. The Hidatsa, the Mandan, and the Arikara, among others, occupied huge expanses of the Midwest. Within these tribal cultures, no laws, courts, judges, prisons, or police existed, nor was there a need for such formal mechanisms of social control. Nonetheless, these tribal cultures prospered with a multitude of informal social control mechanisms that included exclusive hunting privileges reserved to the more powerful tribes in designated geographical boundaries. Of course, the conquest of the native tribes by the U.S. government would later impose a whole new body of land ownership regulations.

Columbus erred in his identification of the indigenous people because he was unaware of the large land mass located between Europe and Asia. Columbus called the Caribbean people Indians because of the mistaken belief he had discovered a shorter route to India. Yet his greater misjudgment was to interpret the indigenous people and cultures that he encountered based on a European point of view (Joseph 1963:4). For a Native American view of the early history of the Americas, see Richter (2001).

## WARFARE BETWEEN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND INDIAN NATIONS

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The world of the Plains tribes changed after 1492 primarily because of disease, economic changes, and the devastating impact on the environment caused by white settlers,

sometimes referred to as “hairy men.” But surprisingly, there was not a great deal of warfare between the native tribes and the frequently insatiable settlers. In fact, during the period of heaviest fighting from 1865 to 1898, the Plains Indians killed only a total of 919 U.S. soldiers, and the large majority of these involved defensive battles in response to assaults by the U.S. Cavalry. More than a third of the aforementioned 919 fatalities occurred at the Fetterman Massacre in 1866 and the Little Big Horn in 1876 (Deverell 2004). By the time of the U.S. Census of 1920, the American Indian population count had fallen below 100,000 people. Of course, while it was true that on some rare occasion American Indians would kill white settlers, this event was extremely rare. In fact, recent calculations of the total number of white settlers killed by Plains Indians from 1800 to 1870 measure such fatalities to be fewer than 400 (see Deverell 2004). This fact by itself goes a long way toward rebutting the savagery stereotype of the Plains Indians. While it is clear that some Europeans genuinely admired American Indians, the popular mainstream culture throughout the period of the Westward Movement portrayed Native Americans as savages. This prejudice ultimately led to genocide and an indifference to the suffering endured by Native Americans (see Altman 1995; Churchill 1999; Thornton 1987). The tale that every time a white man set foot on land after traversing the Atlantic Ocean a Native American fell dead was not far from the reality of the time. While the precise size of the North American Indian populations in 1492 is not known, the best estimate is that it approached 10 million people. Within this context, the study of European and American Indian relations does not focus exclusively on English colonists. Rather, these relations also included the Spanish, French, and Dutch as noted by the insightful analyses offered by the comparative studies of Peckham and Gibson (1969), Delanglez (1935), Kennedy (1950), or Jaenen (1976).

## DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

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In the contemporary view, *diversity* is defined by many as a source of strength, while historically such diversity was identified as a weakness that obstructed assimilation into American society. While the first major assault on tribal societies probably occurred in 1622, it escalated after the American Revolution concluded. In the early 1800s, there were more than a quarter of a million Native Americans in what is now California. By 1900, there were possibly as few as 20,000 full-blooded Indians. The demand for land, for minerals such as gold, and for settlements led to the demise of a vital and healthy body of American Indian civilizations. By 1850, more than half the miners were Indians, and resentful white miners killed them (McMaster and Trafzer 2004:132). Those who did survive disease and genocide were not accorded U.S. rights of citizenship until after 1924, at which time the Dual Citizenship Act was passed.

Thornton (1987) discusses the genocide of Native Americans over the 500 years of contact. While the “Indian Wars” ceased more than 100 years ago, the mistreatment of Native Americans has not ceased. The finding of gold in South Dakota and California and oil in Oklahoma resulted in more hardships for the tribal people.

The American Indian tribes were overwhelmed with many deadly contagious diseases contracted from the settlers.

## TRIBAL REALITIES AND MAINSTREAM MYTHOLOGY

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While the indigenous peoples of this continent may have disappeared from the contemporary public awareness, their reality remains alive. For example, the *Inde* or Apache are dynamically evolving today among the 41 U.S. groups that identify as Apache. For the most part, they continue to live on a few reservations in New Mexico and Arizona. The myth of the vanishing Indian also has given rise to the belief that they have assimilated into white society. For the most part then, Native Americans are studied as if they are a part of the past. Social sciences such as sociology and anthropology as well as philosophy, psychology, history, literature, social work, law, population studies/demography, health, and theology have all contributed in some way to American Indian studies and the mythology that has become ingrained in the American mind.

Despite the existence of a vast body of literature concerning Native Americans (see, e.g., Alvord and Van Pelt 1999; Catlin 1913, 1841; Collier 1947; Coolidge and Coolidge 1930; Cremony 1868; Driver 1964; Embree 1939; Hibben 1946; Kluckhohn and Leighton 1962; Leighton and Kluckhohn 1969; Lindquist 1973; Mails 1973, 1993, 1995; McKenney and Hall 1933; Parsons 1922; Radin 1944; Terrell 1962, 1971, 1972; Thomas 1973; Underhill 1938, 1945, 1946, 1948, 1953, 1956), misrepresentation of the culture of the indigenous people of America emerged. One notable early chronicler of the lives and culture of Native American people was George Catlin (1796–1872), who created portraits and descriptive records of the daily lives and artifacts of North American tribes. Other than children’s books, *Life amongst the Indians: A Book for Youth* (Catlin 1861) and *Last Rambles amongst the Indians of the Rocky Mountains and of the Andes* (Catlin 1866), however, Catlin did not publish any additional books on American Indians.

## THE COMPLEXITY OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

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The complexity of Native American Indian culture is demonstrated through the work of Hyde (1937), Dennis (1940), Silko (1981), Geertz and Lomatuway’ma (1987), Flood (1995), McGaa (1990), Voget (1995), Peters (1995),

LaDuke ([1999] 2004), Kehoe (2001), Grobsmith (1981), Hoebel (1960), and Sarita (1995). The “myth” of the vanishing Indian reinforced the misplaced belief that Indians have become fully assimilated into the U.S. society. But Indian tribal cultures are as different from each other as these are from the general society. Sociological analyses of the culture of the Apache illustrate the complexity of Native American studies.

## Apache Tribal Cultures

The Apache were the last of the hostile tribes to submit to the whites and were, like the Navajo, thought to be descendents of the Athapaskan-speaking peoples. While there is some debate as to when and where the Apache arrived, as with the Navajo, they quickly left their mark as a fierce tribe. Like the Navajo, the Apache engaged in banditry; unlike the Navajo, for the Apache, war was a way of life (Terrell 1972:70).

The word *Apache* is derived from the Spanish *Apachu* meaning enemy (Terrell 1971:47). However, the seven Apache clans call themselves Lacotah, Dakotah, or Innuut, all meaning “the people.” While the spelling varies, many use *Inde* as the name for the Apache. *N’de* is used by the Lipan, and the Jicarilla use *Tinde* (Terrell 1971:309–310). The Apache did not develop a culture of arts and crafts, but the Jicarilla and Mescalero Apache borrowed extensively from the Plains Indians, living in tipis, using braids, and wearing buckskin as did the Plains Indians. The Chiricahua and other Apache groups lived in *wickiups* made of grass and bush covering the branches of young trees. The Apache burial and mortuary practices also are similar to those of the Plains Indians.

The Apache are matrilineal and matrilocal societies that trace their heritage through the family of the female (Sherman 1996:104). Grandmothers instruct their grandchildren on the proper ways of the people, and girl children are considered more valuable than boy children, but both females and males receive the same foot and horseback training (Sherman 1996:124). The Apache developed into several divisions or tribal groups. The ways of the seven Apache clans are not similar. The western Apache, for example, are noted for their lack of words. But as with other tribes, the Apache believe that words are powerful enough to make something happen. Prayers, poems, songs, and spells are not differentiated in that each of these possesses spiritual powers. One rarely sings or speaks a poem for entertainment. Rather, such activities are relegated to tribal ceremony and times of crises.

## CULTURAL HISTORY

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From Jamestown in 1607 to the end of treaty-making in 1871 (Kidwell and Velie 2005:66), land was in contention. In 1871, the U.S. government officially terminated the sovereignty of American Indian tribes and relegated them to

holding limited rights of citizenship. Unlike other minorities, however, Native Americans held little property of value apart from their land. It was in accordance with the Doctrine of Discovery policy adopted by the founding fathers that the legal title to indigenous lands was transferred to the federal government. This legal usurpation occurred between 1778 and 1871 and involved no fewer than 374 treaties. However, because the Doctrine of Discovery policy required both consent and fair payment to authenticate the transfer of indigenous land rights, it is the latter of these treaty requirements, still enforceable, that accounts for a wide variety of tribal hunting rights that range from “whales” (Makah tribe, 1855 treaty) to “walleye fish” (Chippewa tribe, 1837, 1842, and 1854 treaties).

While it is true that Indian schools did teach American Indian children some vocational skills such as pencil making, mainstream society generally took only slight interest in providing employment opportunities. Rather than promoting employment opportunities on the reservations, the federal government encouraged the more highly motivated to move away from the reservations (Schaefer 2006:161). By the twentieth century, most tribal Indians were living on isolated, rural reservations. Unlike other minorities, American Indians were dominated by rigid, paternalistic government rules and regulations. And while Native Americans did not experience the Jim Crow laws, the health care system, the reservation schools, the agency system, and the control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) rendered them marginal, powerless, and isolated. As an agency of the Department of Interior, the BIA controlled everything, including the distribution of food, shelter, police, legal justice, schools, reservation budget, and even tribal membership, philosophy, and structure. From building roads to the level of fire protection, reservation life was controlled by the federal government (Schaefer 2006:158). As the civil rights movement emerged in the twentieth century, the focus of this movement was primarily integrationist. By contrast, Native Americans did not want to seek integration, but they did desire to preserve their heritage and culture.

Native Americans represent the most impoverished group in the United States. Their traditional lifestyles have been difficult to maintain because the land on which reservations are established is generally of poor quality, and whatever good land was possessed was systematically taken from them via treaty-making. Traditional hunting and farming ways were lost, and other food sources were destroyed. Because of a lack of means to satisfy even subsistence needs, over time most Native Americans became totally dependent on federal government aid.

In the past, Native Americans held few marketable skills, experienced low rates of literacy, did not advocate good work habits, and could only secure employment by leaving the reservation (Tinker 2004:15, 19). At the same time, the government attempted to dismantle kinship patterns by taking children from families while encouraging the enculturation of Western ways as taught at reservation schools (Chadwick 1972:532). Parents were jailed or

refused government rations if they did not send their children to boarding schools (Reyhner and Eder 2004:157).

Boarding schools encouraged acculturation; at the same time, learning of tribal languages and support for the native style of dress, religion, and the learning of other aspects of Indian culture was forbidden (Altman 1995:28). The Rapid City Indian School was converted to a tuberculosis sanitarium in 1932, perhaps prophetically, since it had been a breeding ground for trachoma, measles, tuberculosis, injury, and other diseases (Reyhner and Eder 2004:154). When school was in session, the children of different tribes were often boarded together. When school was not in session, the children were often boarded with white families. The “Outing System” was intended to place Indian children in white homes as a son or daughter, but the program quickly became a way for white families of obtaining cheap servants (Reyhner and Eder 2004:139). Teachers did not visit home, parents did not come to schools, and teachers seldom understood the learning styles of Native American students (Schaefer 2006:172).

As tribal control of education has increased in recent years, colleges began to teach tribal history, language, and culture. Entering the twenty-first century, perhaps the greatest danger for Indian education is the push for outcomes assessment, the use of state and national standards, and the emphasis on high stakes testing in all facets of education but especially for promotion to the next grade (Reyhner and Eder 2004:11). Nonetheless, the enforced acculturation of Native American Indian tribes has led to a loss of much tribal cultural tradition, and the consequences, as noted by Deloria (1969), Sheehan (1973), Steiner (1968), and Frazier (2000), are great. Many Indians, obsessed with their cultural survival in the face of cultural attacks from all of the forces of the majority culture, fear that schools are a place for “becoming white” and that even Indian-controlled schools threaten cultural survival (Reyhner and Eder 2004:167).

Despite their minority status and a beleaguered history, Native Americans currently receive a great deal of attention. Part of this interest is reflected in a renewed ethnic awareness. Perhaps more attention is given to the social and economic plight of many of the tribes as casinos, movies, and television make them more visible. On the other hand, American Indians remain invisible to the majority of the American population. While significant improvement to the quality of life on reservations has been made in recent years, many who reside on these reservations continue to face severe hardships and share less in the affluence of modern society than any other minority group.

Perhaps most damaging is the historically grounded mythology depicting Native Americans, especially the males, as drunk, uneducated savages. This stereotype includes the view of Native Americans as recipients of government largess who reside on government-sponsored reservation land while engaged with gambling casinos. Although the American film industry has attempted to counter such stereotypes, it is little known that Native Americans constructed more than 100,000 pre-Columbian



cities, and the Incas successfully conducted brain surgery with at least 1,000 known cases of trephining or removal of parts of the cranial vault during life (Stewart 1950:45). Many other tribes are noted for their study of astronomy, mathematics, geology, and art (Archuleta and Strickland 1991; Aveni 1977; Closs 1986; Peat 1994; Romain 2000; Scott 1999; Young 2000).

## CONTRIBUTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS

Tribal groups gave much to Europeans, including the sharing of food. The Aztecs gave pineapples, barbecue, chili, peppers, chocolate, popcorn, and sweet potatoes. The Mayan potato, later known as the Irish potato, was an important food staple shared with Europeans. The Apache offered walnuts, strawberries, onions, grapes, and stews (Melody 1989:24), and corn was cultivated in the Americas 6,000 to 8,000 years ago (Doherty and Doherty 1991:40). Knowledge pertaining to medicine, housing, and the making of clothing and many other skills were shared with the white settlers.

The clans and tribes of the Pacific Northwest are noted for their ability to weave and fashion clothing from plant and wood fibers. Blankets, rain hats, mats, and baskets were also woven. By contrast, the Plains tribes used buffalo and deer skins to make clothing such as moccasins. Some Plains groups excelled in beadwork to adorn their clothing, while others used porcupine quills, feathers, elk teeth, bear claws, or shells to adorn clothing. Those living in arctic or colder climates made parkas from hides, with pants to cover their legs, along with sunglasses to cover their eyes. Mittens and fur boots were also worn. Tribes living in the desert wore very little in the heat of summer, but woven grass and reeds were used to make clothing, as were sagebrush and bark to make shirts and skirts. Clothing was made of cotton, and with the introduction of sheep, wool was used for a similar purpose. Tribes living in the southeastern area used furs, bark, feathers, hair, and plants to make clothing. The clothing of all clans and tribes was functional, colorful, attractive, and durable (Mason 1946; Solomon 1928).

The housing of Native Americans was unique and varied. Among the approximately 40 Plains tribes, housing varied from dome-shaped lodges made of bark among the Sauk and Fox, the domed-shaped houses thatched with grass of the Wichita, and the log lodges covered with dirt of the Mandan and Pawnee to the tipis of the Lakota. The Pueblo tribes of the Southwest lived in adobe dwellings, some of which has lasted for thousands of years. Some have multiple stories that required wooden ladders to enter the higher levels. The Apache lived in an oval-shaped wickiup covered with grass, brush, and matted materials. The Navajo of the Southwest lived in hogans made of logs and covered with dirt. The Anasazi lived in cliffs carved into the sides of mountains. Some have cedar beams that were 12 to 15 inches in diameter, but no trees are found near the cliffs, signifying that they were transported from elsewhere

(Hollister 1903:34). The Aztecs left behind ruins in New Mexico that were three stories high and had more than 500 rooms. While little is known of the original inhabitants, later groups developed kivas and other structures on the site. The northeastern tribes lived in longhouses with frames of poles covered with strips of bark. Walls and doors typically were made from skins or blankets. The Seminole tribe in the Southeast made their homes on platforms with grass roofs and floors to keep them dry in the warm, wet climate. The northwestern tribes of Kwakiutl, Haida, and Tlingit used totem plank lodges for their dwellings, with an ornate totem near the entrance (Nabokov and Easton 1989).

Native Americans maintain their cultural traditions through a strong kinship system, especially with immediate family members. One universal feature of Native American culture is that it is people centered. One's way of life and thinking are centered on people rather than things. The focus on people has led to practices that distinguish Native American culture. The kinship system places relatives at the center of social activity, and children spend a great deal of time with grandparents and other relatives. By tradition, Native Americans serve to educate and work together; they also care for the dying and the dead. Included in this system is the practice of families providing home care for the elderly. People die among their clan or family and are attended to within in keeping with tribal customs.

One's clan is also important, and each clan member is delegated duties to perform. In this way a storyteller, dancer, or singer assists in transmitting the important aspects of an unwritten culture. American Indians have patterns of sharing along kinship lines as well: This may include money, child care, housing, rides, help with work, or whatever is needed. Generosity and sharing are strong cultural values. The amassing of money and possessions is not a traditional practice. Goods are to be shared, and savings are to be used. Northwestern tribes refer to this practice as the potlatch ceremony (Coe, Snow, and Benson 1986:82). The giveaway ceremonies are still practiced, and public ceremonies such as the celebration of death are organized along kinship lines.

Today, it is not realistically possible to live only a traditional lifestyle. The traditional world of the Native American has been invaded by the dominant white culture. Today, satellite dishes and pickup trucks are found located adjacent to hogans. Such cultural artifacts are reflective of the new reality of life; most Native Americans earn their living in occupations outside the reservation, and they are moving toward participation at almost every social and economic level.

Intermarriage and intramarriage have again become an important issue. Indeed, few contemporary Indian Americans are "full-bloods." As far back as the 1980 census, 53 percent of Native Americans were married to non-Native Americans (Kivisto and Ng 2005:232). More than one half the people living on some reservations are not American Indians. Even much of the land is not owned by the tribe or by individual Indians as much of it has either

been sold or the owners have lost the title to these lands through less than honest dealings (Kidwell and Velie 2005:50). Reservation schools are now mixed with as many white children as tribal children; children of BIA and other government agency employees, clergy, teachers, traders, business owners, ranchers, farmers, landowners, casino employees, and many others live on reservations and attend schools.

## **SPIRITUALITY AND NATIVE AMERICAN VALUES**

The values of Native Americans are reflected through their spirituality. Although all individuals do not think alike (McMaster and Trafzer 2004:14), the sacred is an important part of culture. Since the other world is unknowable, humans cannot find adequate words to describe it. Words only refer to the known human condition, but the sacred is greater. Thus, the sacred is reflected through symbols employed in tribal music, dance, silence, meditation, rituals, and ceremony. Encounters with the sacred evoke deep emotions and behavioral transformations. Music, dance, drama, art, and sculpture inspire spiritual engagement and explanations for things such as birth, existence, and death. Each of the hundreds of indigenous nations has a diverse, rich, heritage of forms of spirituality, expressions, and traditional narratives (Tinker 2004:4).

Evil is also embellished with meaning, with the ultimate evil often portrayed as death. The world is a violent, dangerous place, and yet spiritual worlds evoke images of peace and harmony. The sacred gives meaning and purpose to human existence.

Spiritual empowerment originates from ritual, sharing with family and community, and living according to the model of spirituality of the group. All cultures have rites of passage: marriage, adulthood, aging, and death. Stories are told of children dying, engaging mythic monsters in combat, and challenging spirits in battle. In funeral rites, the newly dead are often thought to be in an in-between state. The dead are respected as ancestors; such ancestors are also feared as a potential source of death for those who live. Rituals that manage dead spirits are developed to cope with grief and loss. Artistic expression is also used to aid with loss. Animals that are to become food for the group are drawn to aid in the hunt before their death. These same animals are thanked for giving their lives to aid the living.

A single American Indian religion cannot be identified. Nonetheless, all the religions and spiritual orientations have similarities. Native Americans believe they dwell in a world filled with spirits: Birds carry messages, animals tell tales, rocks speak, and spirits roam the earth. Communication with mysterious beings is available to all. Dreams and visions provide messages or instructions that all may receive as a gift from the spirits. All life has a purpose; each person exists for a reason, and they spend their lives trying to identify what that reason may be. Visions, dreams, rivers,

rocks, animals, birds, and spirits can give messages to be listened to. Cultures with oral traditions can travel back as far as the chain of memory will allow. In a world filled with spirits, the past provides a guide to the present. Storytellers' tales of animals that talk, of spirits that roam the earth, of rocks that have messages both instruct and entertain those who listen. Storytellers play drums, sing, and dance as they weave their tales, while masks, costumes, regalia, and performance mark their stories.

Generally, such stories suggest all things have a soul. Rocks, plants, animals, and living things are tied together; each has its place in the world. By living in harmony, the world is orderly and good. If disharmony occurs, bad things happen to living things such as sickness, accidents, disasters, and death. Each is responsible for the other; each must protect the other. This includes following customary rituals, forgiveness, patience, sharing, and living a spiritual life. In the tribal cultures, harmony does not include viewing oneself as better, being wealthier, having higher status, using one's power for personal gain, or other forms of self-aggrandizement. Neither is success measured by occupation, money, or power. One is a success if one lives in harmony, acquires sacred knowledge, and carries out one's responsibilities as well as possible. A storyteller, rug maker, grandparent, or whoever does one's role in harmony with spirituality will have good fortune and be admired by others.

One does not need to be a chief or a community leader to be admired. Wealth is not a major determinant of tribal status. Children are raised in an environment devoid of coercion or threat. They learn by observing older children, adults, and tribal elders role modeling that which is appropriate behavior. Living in a world of spirituality makes it easier for children to develop a sense of the spiritual. The spiritual nature of everything in life becomes second nature. One also has ceremonies that reinforce the spiritual nature of the world. Fear is not the basis of life, but being in harmony with the world is.

One engages in rituals, ceremonies, and community as one proceeds through childhood, adulthood, and becoming elderly as the sun follows its cycle. Death is not feared; it is natural and is to be accepted as stories indicate. These sacred stories and myths teach how to live. Myths represent "the Truth." Myths and stories provide the ultimate meaning of life. The myths, sacred stories, songs, and epics are models for living, oral traditions from ancestors and other sacred beings. There are stories, for example, pertaining to marriage, hunting, work, play, art, and war. Such stories define the Indian culture, assist in creating the worldview, and develop basic values. This gives the living a place and role in the world connecting the past to the present in a meaningful manner. Questions pertaining to why we are here, why there is suffering, and the purpose of life were addressed by the ancients; we must accept life as it is. The ancients provide us with a model for how to live.

The time dimension of tribal life is so fundamental in American Indian cultures that it is often not noticed by white observers. John Collier writes about the Tewan

Pueblo, Tesuque, suffering a famine that whites wanted to help end. The Tesuques saw this as a diversion from the real issue, which was the white man's plan to kill their past by shattering the bridge of tribal land and tribal religion that united the past and present on the deathless two-way journey from the living past to the living future (Collier 1949:7). Collier further suggests that Native Americans live in a time dimension that is different from our own, one that is not linear but rather places the Native American experience beyond the stars (Moskowitz and Collier 1949:2–3).

## RELIGIOUS ISSUES

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Clearly, there are those who hold respect if not admiration for the traditional religious practices of Native Americans. Yet the dominant, mainstream culture seems generally inclined to either ignore or suppress the indigenous cultures that it has tried to destroy since Europeans first arrived. Many Catholic priests, known as “Blackrobes,” and other clergy do go to great lengths to respect and preserve traditional ways. Many funeral directors also make great efforts to respect and preserve traditional ways. Even among the clergy and those who call themselves religious, there are many who exploit, abuse, and ultimately denigrate cultures, beliefs, and peoples who are different (for further information on American Indian religions, see Anderson 1997; Archuleta and Strickland 1991; Burland 1965; Curtis 1972; Fergusson 1931; Marquis 1974; Moskowitz and Collier 1949; Powers 1982; Ross 1989; Stolzman 1986; Taylor 1994; Tinker 2004; Underhill 1946, 1953; Wall and Arden 1990). Tinker (2004:104) suggests that missionaries of all denominations failed because they did not recognize the personhood of Indian people and that the indigenous communities are being swallowed up in a cultural genocide.

## CRAFTS

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Native American arts and crafts include pottery, beadwork, woodwork, stonework, applied decoration, skin work, textiles, basket-making, shellwork, feather work, bone work, and cave art. Each of these crafts embraces the spiritual dimension. Few recognize the degree of sophistication and development of the arts and crafts of Native Americans. While it is recognized that unique pottery was produced by the Hopi, Navajo, Pueblo, and other southwestern tribes, few are aware of the glasswork, figurine-making, engraving, incising, and decorated pots created by Great Lakes area tribes, who first developed metallic tools. The silverwork of the Southwest is well known, but not much is known of the Kiowa or the Iroquois. Navajo rugs and blankets are well known, but few know of the Northwest coast or the Great Lakes tribes' weaving skills (Whiteford 1970:4).

As early as 1850, Navajo blankets sold for \$50 in gold, which was an excellent price at the time (Rodee 1981:2).

Navajo blankets have been found among the Shoshones of Idaho and Utah, demonstrating that Navajo blankets were sought through trade by other tribes who did not make such blankets (Hollister 1903:49). Each blanket is unique. As the blanket is woven, it assumes its nature and purpose. Symbolically, the weaver tells the story of her life as she weaves. The colors, designs, symbols, and patterns are all part of the story. Each fabric has its own individuality (Hollister 1903:113).

Today, Navajo blankets are quite expensive but not very profitable, given the extensive number of hours required to clean, dye, and prepare the wool for weaving. More than 1,000 hours are needed to craft a blanket that may sell for \$1,200; two to three sheep provide the wool to make a 3 by 5 feet rug; 15 hours are required to shear the sheep and to clean the wool; to make the yarn from raw wool requires 368 hours; dying the yarn takes 19 hours; to weave the rug requires 158 hours. The total blanket labor production time is 560 hours.

Basket-making appears to have been practiced by many tribes who developed an almost endless variety of forms, styles, and patterns of baskets (Hollister 1903:10). And the Hopi are noted for their pottery and kachinas; they also produce excellent drawings, paintings, masks, and garments. The kachinas and masks are personations or symbols depicted in the form of pictures, dolls, and masks of ancient gods (Fewkes 1903:15). Fewkes (1903) illustrates 260 individual kachina figures, including many reproductions of Hopi artists, as do Mason (1946), D'Amato and D'Amato (1968), and Salomon (1928).

## THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN INDIAN/NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

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Much more research is being published because of the establishment of several journals as outlets, including *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *American Indian Quarterly*, *Northeast Indian Quarterly*, *Wicazo Sa Review*, *Cherokee Nation*, *Ancient Society*, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, *American Antiquity*, *American Indian Law Review*, *Contemporary Indian Affairs*, *Indian Historian*, *Native Peoples Akwesasne Notes*, *Blue Cloud Quarterly*, and *Letan Wankatakiya*. But the research of the past reported by anthropologists in particular blurs the mythology of American Indians with the realities and the diversity of ethnic traditions of numerous tribes. In addition, the impact of Christianity on indigenous native religions and the exploitive nature of the relationships between American Indian tribes and the white populations have drastically diluted American Indian culture in what Tinker (2004) calls cultural genocide.

### Respecting Indian Afterlife Rituals

Native Americans engage in rituals and practices that reflect their religious beliefs pertaining to death and

spiritual afterlife. Like other groups, American Indians view desecration of the dead to be a seriously offensive act. It is believed that disease and even death may befall those who violate the dead and their sacred resting place, but archaeologists have long dug up human remains to learn about culture and health-related matters. Following the Civil War, the Surgeon General of the United States ordered U.S. Army personnel to obtain Indian skulls for study at the Army Medical Museum in Washington, D.C. (McMaster and Trafzer 2004:16). Subsequently, the skulls of Arapahoe, Cheyenne, and Kiowa who were killed at the Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado became objects of this scientific inquiry. Because of such acts, many tribes are reluctant to discuss their practices with contemporary researchers.

### EMERGENT TRIBAL COLLEGES

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It is only in recent years that tribal colleges, traditional curricula, American Indian teachers, and Native America schools have achieved some attention. Fortunately, the importance of Native American culture is recognized, as is the need to develop the infrastructure to preserve this heritage. In this area, tribal elders and councils are working to encourage such preservation. One significant move in this direction is the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., in 2005.

### CONTEMPORARY INDIAN HEALTH PROFILES

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While tribes have managed to survive despite enduring 400 years of mistreatment and government domination, problems continue to abound today, including increased rates of suicide, diabetes, drug and alcohol abuse, and poverty on the reservations (Reyhner and Eder 2004:5). In addition, American Indians experience high rates of cancer, heart disease, unemployment, dropping out of school, poverty, and alcoholism. These problems are especially acute among those living on reservations; thus, it is not surprising that Native Americans are the most likely to die before the age of 45 than members of any other racial or ethnic group (Schaefer 2006:174). Obviously, health studies and health care will rank high during the twenty-first century.

### EROSION OF INDIAN TRIBAL LANGUAGES

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Other issues that will require attention during the twenty-first century are related to the loss of tribal languages and culture. There are 154 surviving Native American languages, but only 20 tribes encourage the children to learn

their traditional language (Schaefer 2006:150), and just under 50 percent of all the Indian language speakers in the United States today are Navajo. Seven hundred American Indian languages were spoken in 1500 (Schaefer 2006:151); by the year 2000, only 15.4 percent of all persons self-identified as American Indians reported speaking an Indian language.

### INDIAN GAMING ECONOMICS

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Economically there are reasons to be optimistic. The casino industry serves as a major source of revenue, and tribal casinos represent a relatively new shift in federal policy toward Native Americans. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1998 is intended to encourage economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal government. In this area too, the research foci will include aspects of the gaming industry among other entrepreneurial activities.

### INDIAN LAND RESOURCES

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The remaining land base of many Native Americans has come under renewed assault as lands that were previously considered worthless now turn out to contain valuable energy, mineral, or water resources. But the present is unlike the past. Whereas in the past the extraction of these resources has frequently resulted in the impoverishment of Native Americans and the serious degradation of their environment, current concern among Native Americans is focused on the preservation of reservation lands by effective resistance against toxic and nuclear waste dumping, the violation of sacred sites and the ongoing conflict over treaty-based hunting, fishing and gathering rights. As the modern American Indian tribes have begun to assert their surviving sovereignty rights over their lands and resources, they are developing their own air and water quality regulations to protect their reservation resources from the effects of off-reservation pollution sources (see Gedicks 1993; Hooks and Smith 2004; LaDuke [1999] 2004).

### NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES AND U.S. SOCIETY

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Finally, Duane Champagne (1998) suggests that Native American studies are for everyone and that as a human group, Indian nations can be compared with other groups in technology, cultural worldviews, history, adaptation to global markets, and even the history of all humanity (Champagne 1998:182). This perspective offers an important opportunity for all to enlarge our grasp of the cultural richness of Native American peoples and their contribution to mainstream American society.

**Appendix 48.1** Native American Studies with Four-Year Programs

Arizona State University	Stanford University
Augsburg College	University of Alaska Fairbanks
Bacone College	University of California, Berkeley
Bemidji State University	University of California, Davis
Black Hills State University	University of California, Los Angeles
California State University, East Bay	University of California, Riverside
Colgate University	University of Minnesota, Duluth
Creighton University	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Dartmouth College	University of Montana, Missoula
Evergreen State College	University of New Mexico
Goddard College	University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Haskell Indian Nations University	University of North Dakota
Humboldt State University	University of Oklahoma
Institute of American Indian Arts	University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
Montana State University, Northern	University of South Dakota
Northeast State University	University of the Incarnate Word
Northern Arizona University	University of Washington
Northland College	University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire
Salish Kootenai College	University of Wisconsin, Green Bay
Sarah Lawrence College	Weber State University
Simon's Rock College of Bard	

**Appendix 48.2** Tribal Colleges

<b>Bay Mills Community College</b> 12214 West Lakeshore Drive Brimley, MI 49715 906-248-3354 Fax: 906-248-3351 www.bmcc.org	<b>Comanche Nation College</b> 1608 SW 9th St. Lawton, OK 73501 580-591-0203 Fax: 580-353-7075 www.cnc.cc.ok.us
<b>Blackfeet Community College</b> P. O. Box 819 Browning, MT 59417 406-338-7755 Fax: 406-338-3272 www.bfcc.org	<b>Crownpoint Institute of Technology</b> P. O. Box 849 Crownpoint, NM 87313 505-786-4100 Fax: 505-786-5644 www.cit.cc.nm.us/home.html
<b>Cankdeska Cikana (Little Hoop) Community College</b> P. O. Box 269 Fort Totten, ND 58335 701-766-4415 Fax: 701-766-4077 www.littlehoop.edu/	<b>D-Q University</b> P. O. Box 409 Davis, CA 95617 530-758-0470 Fax: 530-758-4891 www.dqu.cc.ca.us
<b>Chief Dull Knife College</b> P. O. Box 98 Lame Deer, MT 59043 406-477-6215 Fax: 406-477-6219 www.cdnc.edu/	<b>Diné College</b> P. O. Box 126 Tsaile, AZ 86556 928-724-6671 Fax: 928-724-3327 www.dinecollege.edu
<b>College of Menominee Nation</b> P. O. Box 1179 Keshena, WI 54135 715-799-5600 Fax: 715-799-1308 www.menominee.edu	<b>Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College</b> 2101 14th Street Cloquet, MN 55720-2964 218-879-0800 Fax: 218-879-0814 www.fdl.cc.mn.us

(Continued)

## Appendix 48.2 (Continued)

**Fort Belknap College**

P. O. Box 159  
Harlem, MT 59526  
406-353-2607  
Fax: 406-353-2898  
www.fbcc.edu/

**Fort Berthold Community College**

220 Eighth Avenue North  
P. O. Box 490  
New Town, ND 58763  
701-627-4738  
Fax: 701-627-3609  
www.fbcc.bia.edu

**Fort Peck Community College**

P. O. Box 398  
Poplar, MT 59255  
406-768-6300  
Fax: 406-768-5552  
www.wolfpoint.com/college.htm

**Haskell Indian Nations University**

155 Indian Avenue  
P. O. Box 5030  
Lawrence, KS 66046-4800  
785-749-8479  
Fax: 785-749-8411  
www.haskell.edu

**Institute of American Indian Arts**

83 Avan Nu Po Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
505-424-2300  
Fax: 505-424-0050  
www.iaiancad.org

**Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College**

409 Superior Avenue  
P. O. Box 519  
Baraga, MI 49908  
906-353-8161  
Fax: 906-353-8107  
www.kbocc.org/

**Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College**

13466 West Trepania Rd  
Hayward, WI 54843  
715-634 4790  
Fax: 715-634-5049  
www.lco.edu

**Leech Lake Tribal College**

Rt. 3, Box 100  
Cass Lake, MN 56633  
218-335-4200  
Fax: 218-335-4215  
www.lltc.org

**Little Big Horn College**

P. O. Box 370  
Crow Agency, MT 59022  
406-638-3100 (main number)  
Fax: 406-638-3169  
www.lbhc.cc.mt.us

**Little Priest Tribal College**

P. O. Box 270  
Winnebago, NE 68071  
402-878-2380  
Fax: 402-878-2355  
www.lptc.bia.edu/

**Nebraska Indian Community College  
College Hill**

P. O. Box 428  
Macy, NE 68039  
402-837-5078  
Fax: 402-837-4183  
www.thenicc.edu

**Northwest Indian College**

2522 Kwina Road  
Bellingham, WA 98226  
360-676-2772  
Fax: 360-738-0136  
www.nwic.edu

**Oglala Lakota College**

490 Piya Wiconi Road  
Kyle, SD 57752  
605-455-6022  
Fax: 605-455-6023  
www.olc.edu

**Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College**

2284 Enterprise Drive  
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858  
989-775-4123  
Fax: 989-772-4528  
www.sagchip.org/tribalcollege

**Salish Kootenai College**

P. O. Box 117  
Pablo, MT 59855  
406-275-4800  
Fax: 406-275-4801  
www.skcc.edu

**Sinte Gleska University**

P. O. Box 409  
Rosebud, SD 57570  
605-856-5880  
Fax: 605-856-5401  
sinte.indian.com

**Sisseton Wahpeton College**

P. O. Box 689  
Sisseton, SD 57262  
605-698-3966  
Fax: 605-698-3132  
www.swcc.cc.sd.us/

**Si Tanka University**

P. O. Box 220  
435 North Elm Street  
Eagle Butte, SD 57625  
605-964-6044  
Fax: 605-964-1144  
www.sioux.org/sitankauniv.html

## Appendix 48.2 (Continued)

**Sitting Bull College**

1341 92nd Street  
 Fort Yates, ND 58538  
 701-854-3861  
 Fax: 701-854-3403  
[www.sittingbull.edu](http://www.sittingbull.edu)

**Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute**

P. O. Box 10146  
 9169 Coors Road, NW  
 Albuquerque, NM 87184  
 505-346 2347  
 Fax: 505-346-2343  
[www.sipi.bia.edu](http://www.sipi.bia.edu)

**Stone Child College**

RR1, Box 1082  
 Box Elder, MT 59521  
 406-395-4875  
 Fax: 406-395-4836  
[www.montana.edu/wwwsc/](http://www.montana.edu/wwwsc/)

**Tohono O'odham Community College**

P. O. Box 3129  
 Sells, AZ 85634  
 520-383-8401  
 Fax: 520-383-8403  
[www.tocc.cc.az.us](http://www.tocc.cc.az.us)

**Turtle Mountain Community College**

P. O. Box 340  
 Belcourt, ND 58316  
 701-477-7862  
 Fax: 701-477-7807  
[www.turtle-mountain.cc.nd.us](http://www.turtle-mountain.cc.nd.us)

**United Tribes Technical College**

3315 University Drive  
 Bismarck, ND 58504  
 701-255-3285  
 Fax: 701-530-0605  
[www.uttc.edu](http://www.uttc.edu)

**White Earth Tribal and Community College**

210 Main Street South  
 P. O. Box 478  
 Mahanomen, MN 56557  
 218-935-0417  
 Fax: 218-935-0423  
[www.wetcc.org](http://www.wetcc.org)

**Wind River Tribal College**

P. O. Box 8300  
 533 Ethete Road  
 Ethete, WY 82520  
 307-335-8243  
 Fax: 307-335-8148  
[www.wrtribalcollege.com](http://www.wrtribalcollege.com)

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## VICTIMOLOGY

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### THE DEVELOPMENT OF VICTIMOLOGY

The second half of the twentieth century saw the development of social concern, protest, activism, intervention, legal, political, and social services reform, research, and teaching about victims of crime. In some countries, the victim movement became an important separate political force leading to substantial reforms in many fields. It is particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world that the movement began and flourished, expanding eventually to other parts of the world. In the United States, the victim movement began in the 1970s. The women's movement, inspired by the civil rights movement, was one of its primary moving forces. Another was the social concern about the dramatic increase in crime rates in the United States. Conservatives and right-of-center activists and politicians pointed out that the system of constitutional protections in the United States favored the suspect and the convicted criminal while it trampled on the needs of the victims denying them minimal rights and consideration. Thus, focusing on the victims became a rallying cry for a more restrictive approach to criminal law and the administration of justice. Also influential were the substantial efforts undertaken after the urban riots of the late 1960s to improve the operations of the criminal justice system, as well as the nascent consumer movement, which demanded more accountability not only of producers of consumer goods but also of the state, the justice system, and social, medical, and other services (Viano 1992a:1-2).

Feminists forcefully pointed out the problem faced by women victims of sexual assault when they came into contact with the police, hospitals, and the courts. Practitioners

and academics realized that the justice system did not serve the victims of crime. Instead, it "used" them to obtain needed information, cooperation, and services (e.g., as witnesses) without giving them any active role, respect, or consideration in return. In essence, it was said that the system "revictimized" the victim.

Other groups contributed to creating a general awareness of the concept of victim and the plight of various victims and of the need for support services and, most of all, appropriate legislative reform. A good example of this type of group is Mothers against Drunk Drivers.

Child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, missing and exploited children, the elderly, the survivors of victims of homicide, date rape, sexual harassment, and patient abuse by therapists were added to the areas of concern of victimology. The success of these groups served to highlight the general importance of "victims" as an effective political symbol and as a rallying point for a variety of grievances, dissatisfactions, and political agendas. In the United States, the early 1980s saw several expressions of this political awareness and recognition through the establishment of the Victims of Crime Task Force (1980), subsequently called the Presidential Commission on Victims of Crime, and the Family Violence Task Force (1984), as well as the passage at the federal level of the Victims and Witness Protection Act of 1982, the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, the Justice Assistance Act of 1984, and, importantly, the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, which was subsequently revised.

Several state-level developments demonstrated the importance of the victim movement in the United States. Beginning with California, where in 1982 the voters



approved the widely publicized Victim's Bill of Rights, or Proposition 8, most states in the United States have passed similar bills of rights, granting the victims a better standing in the criminal justice system, even though it does not yet approximate the rights that the defendants have.

The first jurisdictions to introduce a program of compensation or reimbursement for victims of crime were Australia, England, and California. The enactment of compensation programs for victims of crime by practically all states and the U.S. federal government and several countries, the provision of funds to support domestic violence shelters, and the funding of victim/witness programs are other positive developments engineered on behalf of the victims.

One important innovation in the criminal justice system has been the introduction and use of victim impact statements, statements that represent one of the major breakthroughs in the victims' rights movement. Mandated by law in many states, such statements inform the sentencing judge of the physical, financial, and emotional impact of the crime on the victim or on the victim's survivors so that these elements can be taken into account when reaching a sentencing decision. Most states in the United States now allow for some form of victim participation at sentencing (Viano 1992a:2).

### International Victimology

The field of victimology is international. Worldwide interest in the victims of crime began and grew during the 1970s for many of the same reasons that led to the beginning of the victims' movement in the United States—namely, the increase in crime rates, the inefficiency and lack of care on the part of the criminal justice system, and the growing realization of the complicated and long-lasting negative effects of crime on its victims. However, the emphasis on the rights of the individual and the struggle for the recognition of the rights of groups discriminated against are historically unique to the United States and cannot be considered the roots of the victim movement in European countries (Viano 1992a:3–4).

In European nations, a strong central government has traditionally played a major role in providing extensive social services from “cradle to grave.” Thus, the needs of the victims of crime have been addressed by appealing to the already existing responsibility of the government for the social welfare of the citizenry. Victim services represent an extension of the role of provider and protector that European central governments have been fulfilling for decades. Consequently, the transition there was different, smoother and not as confrontational as in the United States. In addition, the civil law system prevalent in continental Europe provides victims considerable rights to take active part in the justice system, for example, by joining the criminal prosecution of the offender with a civil action seeking compensation and restitution.

For this reason, the victim movement in Europe has concentrated more on providing services than pursuing victim rights and has done this more cooperatively with governmental agencies. In all European countries, victim services are normally funded by the government. Thus, the effort to enact legislation empowering victims and allowing them a larger and more active role in the justice system, which has consumed considerable energy and resources in the American victim movement, is not as prevalent in Europe.

Victim services in European countries are not based on the criminal justice system. Rather, they are independent social agencies, staffed by professionals. This again represents a significant difference from the American experience where services were founded and still function in many localities on a grassroots basis thanks to the tradition of volunteerism existing in the United States. With the exception of Great Britain, volunteer work is definitely not valued as much in Europe (Viano 1992a:3). One of the difficulties faced by the victim movement in some countries is the belief that the legal and social welfare systems of the country already provide for the needs of the victim.

## INTERDISCIPLINARITY PERSPECTIVES OF VICTIMOLOGY

### Theoretical Perspectives

Although victimology may lack a theoretical foundation, it is not necessarily improper for victimology to adapt to its needs the theoretical perspectives of sociology, social work, public administration, social policy, law, and justice. Victimology simply represents a different kind of application of theoretical insights developed within other disciplines.

The uniqueness of victimology may stem from its focusing on populations and crises that have been neglected in the past by more established disciplines (Viano 1992a:3). Vulnerable people who experience crisis may indeed constitute the common denominator linking victimology with disciplines that provide a focus for research and intervention. Victimology is an interdisciplinary field that depends on the contributions of sociologists, social workers, psychologists, doctors, nurses, political scientists, criminal justice officials, and other professionals, activists, advocates, and reformers. In the academic world, victimology is considered a branch or area of specialization within criminology.

### Victimology and Criminology

While criminology investigates why people commit crime, victimology pursues questions relating to why some individuals, households, and businesses are the target of criminal activity. That is, victimology looks at the roots of

vulnerability. While criminology dedicates considerable attention to repeat offenders, victimology analyzes why certain victims are victimized more than once and why. Moreover, whereas criminologists investigate how social, economic, and political situations may instigate criminal activity, victimologists examine personality characteristics, social factors, and cultural pressures that assist in explaining why certain individuals or groups in society are victimized more than others or why certain persons may be inclined to take risks and become victimized as a consequence (Viano 1992a:1–4).

The methodology is commonly rooted in social science research methods. Both areas of inquiry examine the legal and justice systems, the social services, and the welfare and emergency medical and psychological health systems. In particular, criminologists attempt to identify the needs of offenders such as counseling, therapy, job training, drug treatment, and rehabilitation, while victimologists work on the psychological, emotional, medical, and financial needs of victims of crime and verify the effectiveness of the programs offered to victims of crime.

Some analysts maintain that beyond victims of crime victimology should be concerned with victims of abuse of power, accidents, and man-made and natural disasters. The ultimate goal is to develop crisis-intervention strategies and introduce short- and long-term approaches to solving the pressing problems facing victims. However, the majority of victimologists favor a more restrictive view of the field as limited to criminal victimization. This allows for a clearer focus, definite boundaries, and a field easier to define and manage (Karmen 2004:21–24).

## Victimology and Politics

Victimology takes its practitioners into the political spectrum. Liberal, conservative, or moderate philosophies play a major role in influencing how one approaches victim-related problems. The conservatives stress personal responsibility and thus tend to blame the victim and place on the victim the burden of solving his or her problems without relying on the state or the community. A liberal focuses on conditions in society, such as racism, poverty, sexism, ageism, that influence the likelihood of being victimized. Thus, liberals stress on solutions that give the government a considerable intervention role to alleviate the root causes of victimization while promoting the notion of entitlement for the victimized.

There are also radical approaches that stress on the exploitative and oppressive relations that are built in the whole social system. This transcends street crime and expands the field to include a vast number of harmful activities that have been inflicted on people and society through structural inequalities in society, racism, sexism, environmental pollution, consumer fraud, and white-collar crimes in general, restricting access to education and to the job market. Here, the victim is not necessarily a particular person but an entire group of people, for reasons of gender

(women), age, socioeconomic interests, type of work (e.g., mine workers, factory workers) among others. The legal and justice systems are seen as part of the problem, not the solution, because these exist primarily to protect the interests of powerful groups and the privileged.

Victimology focuses on a problematic situation, its consequences, and solutions. While striving for objectivity may make it appear cold and detached from the human tragedies that it studies, it actually has an important positive side as it strives to diminish the impact of human suffering and ultimately to prevent it (Viano 1989:4–10).

## The Contributions of Sociology

The role of sociology in the development and scientific character of victimology is substantial. Victimology is based on a theory of society, social relations, the power structure, and the role and the function of law. Thus, the foundation of victimology is supported by sociological theories that reflect diverse political and value approaches.

Most research conducted in victimology is survey based. Thus, sociology has contributed the tools essential to collect and analyze the essential data, to test for significance and validity, and to conduct the large-scale National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS).

The NCVS has undergone a series of revisions and changes that have been primarily the work of social scientists, survey research specialists, and statisticians (Doerner and Lab 2002:30–31). The same is true for the International Crime Victimization Survey sponsored by the United Nations. The large amount of data collected over the last few decades, especially in the United States, Europe, Australia, Japan, Canada, and other parts of the world, and now often archived for easy access, analysis, interpretation, and policy making is the outcome of surveys and research projects often directed by social scientists, especially sociologists.

## CURRENT STATE OF SOCIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

### Collecting Reliable Information about Crime Victims

Victimologists collect and analyze data to address basic issues. These issues relate to the number of persons who are harmed by criminals each year, the target of most victimizations, the increasing or decreasing likelihood of victimization; the time and spatial locations of certain types of crime; when weapons are used; how people react when attacked; how victims fight back or flee; how many are hurt, the need for medical attention or hospitalization; the losses for the victim, the community, and family members. This type of “big picture” of victimization was not available until the early 1970s.

The usefulness of these data, incidence, trends, and patterns is clear. The data provide a basis for responding to practical questions such as the chances one has to become a victim in a given year or whether or not crime affects all types of people equally. Are there groups that are targeted more often than others? In other words, victimologists develop differential rates of victimization. International surveys also allow us to compare crime rates and probability of victimization. On the basis of these international comparisons, countries are ranked based on crime rates and the likelihood of victimization.

### **The Uniform Crime Reports versus the National Crime Victimization Survey**

In the United States, there are two major sources of information—the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), Crime in the United States, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics NCVS, Criminal Victimization in the United States. Both are distributed by the U.S. Department of Justice.

The UCR was introduced in 1927 by a committee organized by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The mission of the committee was to develop a uniform set of definitions and reporting forms for gathering crime statistics. Presently, about 96 percent of police departments participate in this program.

From the point of view of victimology, the UCR method of collecting data suffers from many defects that limit its use. Among these limitations are underreporting, variant definitions of crime across jurisdictions, lack of information collected on the victim, the mixing of attempted and completed crimes, and crimes against impersonal entities and against a person. The FBI has modified and improved the UCR, for instance, by changing the data-collection format to that of the National Incident-based Reporting System.

Overall, there are strong reservations about the accuracy of the data kept by the 17,000 police departments that report data to the UCR. To address this issue, a survey was introduced and conducted for the first time in 1966 for the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. Ten thousand households were interviewed. The 1966 survey and the subsequent surveys confirmed the existence of the "dark figure" of unreported crimes; thus, there is more crime than that represented by the figures reported by the FBI.

Comparing data obtained through the NCVS and the UCR shows that there is much more crime than is reported through the UCR. Moreover, the NCVS is very useful in making possible certain types of analysis such as changes over time in violent crime rates, finding out whether more robberies also involved murders; identifying and recognizing differential risks of being robbed or murdered; and being able to project cumulative risks (Doerner and Lab 2002:25–43; Karmen 2004:45–55).

### **Victimization Risk Factors: Blaming the Victim?**

The close relationship between criminology and victimology has led victimologists to adopt criminal law and criminology terminology and expressions such as responsibility, culpability, guilt, blame, participation in crime, and shared responsibility. This terminology could imply that at least some victims, such as certain offenders, did something wrong, ignored warnings, took unnecessary chances, did not take appropriate precautions to reduce their exposure to crime, instigated the crime, acted foolishly, or made bad choices. The underlying reasoning is that the victim is at least partially at fault, that what happened was of their own making, and that victimization was avoidable.

"Blaming the victim" has been a point of controversy, especially in the context of sexual assault, rape, and domestic violence. The women's movement has rejected any insinuation that a woman would precipitate her own victimization by how she acted, where she went to socialize, how much she had to drink, how she dressed, and how she interacted with men. On the contrary, the women's movement and radical feminists stress that women have the right to act, dress, behave, drink to excess, tease, etc., without this justifying in any way their being sexually assaulted or harassed.

Raising the possibility of a victim's contribution to his or her own victimization also brings forth the issue of who should bear the cost and the blame of victimization. How many precautions should a person be expected to reasonably undertake before being blamed for the crime occurring? How much of the cost of preventing crime through behavior modification, target hardening, lifestyle changes, variations in daily routines, installation of alarms, lights, and other defenses, etc., should a citizen bear, instead of society actively taking primary responsibility to prevent crime, so that she or he can claim to be a legitimate, innocent victim, should a crime take place? At what point is safe, safe enough?

The early victimologists did focus freely on risk factors asserting that personal characteristics play a role in certain people being victimized instead of others. They spoke of the "criminal dyad or couple" whose interactions created a strong dynamic leading to the crime. For example, Von Hentig (1941) identifies as more likely victims of crime the mentally retarded, newly arrived immigrants, lower educated people, the very young, and the very old. Wolfgang (1958) examined the types of people whose actions contributed to their homicide. Others spoke of the attraction between greedy and avaricious people and the swindlers who take advantage of them. Tourists are commonly depicted as being vulnerable to victimization because they carry valuables with them (money, travelers' checks, credit cards), often indulge in alcohol and drugs, or look for sexual adventure, which impair their ability to take care of themselves, are vulnerable to all types of

swindles, and typically do not return to the jurisdiction as witnesses for the prosecution that assures the impunity of their victimizers (Viano 1989:4–11; Karmen 2004:87–89).

### **Lifestyle and Routine Activities**

Lifestyle and routine activities concepts assist in understanding differences in vulnerability to violence and theft. Sociologically, lifestyle pertains to how people spend their time and money at work or in leisure activities and the social roles they occupy. Although it seems that lifestyles are freely chosen, in reality lifestyle is imposed by circumstances. Role expectations also can lead to victimization, such as the stereotypes imposed on young males based on their willingness to fight to defend their honor and that of their date, or how young people spend their leisure time. Looking for certain types of excitement and fun can also increase risk levels. Examples that increase a person's vulnerability include going out at night without a clear destination in mind, partying with complete strangers, going to bars and nightclubs, and leaving some place intoxicated. This is even more so when one is from "out of town" and thus, as a tourist or visitor, not fully aware of danger levels in different areas of a locality. Such behaviors increase the risk of assault, robbery, battery, sexually assault, and even homicide.

Proponents of the theory of routine activities emphasize three elements and the resultant interactions: the availability of suitable targets, the presence of motivated offenders, and the absence of capable guardians. Daily living patterns that affect victimization are commuting, going to school or work, shopping, and exercising outside the home. Women have become more vulnerable to victimization as they join the work force in higher numbers thereby increasing their exposure to unprotected environments. The daily routines control the ecology of victimization (Karmen 2004:90–93).

The routine activities theory is quite useful because it combines some major themes in criminology and victimology. The first is that social conditions produce criminally inclined individuals. The second is that suitable targets increase as affluence spreads. The third stresses the importance of preventive measures and social control, both formal and informal, in discouraging criminals (Doerner and Lab 2002:273–274; Karmen 2004:93–96). These approaches to explaining why certain people may be victimized more than others are sociological because they emphasize a collective, general social pattern of behavior or perspective as opposed to individualized explanations. They also stress informal and formal mechanisms of social control.

### **Balance between Safety and Risk**

Victimology raises the issue of what is the proper balance between safety and risk. Although absolute safety may be unattainable, it is possible to reduce risk. This

discourse is particularly relevant in an environment in which people seemingly demand protection from terrorist attacks and are ready to sacrifice civil liberties and constitutional rights to ostensibly guarantee a risk-free environment.

There are also strong cultural values in the United States that are contradictory and confusing. On the one hand, American culture emphasizes and stresses risk taking as a valuable trait that has made it possible for America to grow, prosper, and become a magnet for immigrants. On the other hand, the growth of a settled middle class and also of people living in cities and depending to a large extent on various agencies of government rather than on themselves and their neighbors for essential services has given preeminence to careful and prudent planning and investing for one's future, career, old age, rainy day financial crisis, and the raising and education of one's children. Additionally, our increasing faith in science and its ability to tame nature, increase predictability, and control chance events and our technological advances that also encourage people to think that our mastery over the world and its uncertainties is growing emphasize again that we enjoy considerable and increasing control over our surroundings and life events. All of this translates into widely divergent attitudes toward crime victims. Those who accept risk and unpredictability in life tend to sympathize and support victims of crime without question and regardless of how imprudent their behavior may have been. Those who stress planning and controlling one's life will be more inclined to question and second-guess the victim's choices, behavior, and lifestyle; attribute some responsibility of what happened to the victim; and demand that the victim modify his or her behavior, lifestyle, routines, and/or surroundings to prevent future occurrences (Karmen 2004:95–99).

### **Victim Blaming versus Victim Defending**

Not all victims are the same. They can be ranked on a continuum of legitimacy that spans from the totally legitimate or innocent and totally undeserving victim to the totally irresponsible person who is deserving of victimization. One example of the first is the virtuous, faithful, and responsible mother who is brutally assaulted and raped while doing family chores. An example of the second is the man who ends up dead or seriously injured as a consequence of a barroom fight that he himself started without provocation. On occasion victims are scrutinized, dissected, and analyzed in an attempt to decide whether or not they are legitimate victims and therefore deserving of compassion, understanding, support, and protection. For instance, during the last quarter of the twentieth century there was a major debate over how society should respond through the law, the administration of justice, and the provision of social and other services to the victims of sexual assault. "Blaming the victim" because of the way she was dressed, behaved, where she went and when, whether or not she consumed alcohol, whether she flirted and/or

“provoked” men through her behavior, and dress, accepted a ride or a date, or going to the apartment of someone she just met was not uncommon; major efforts were required on the part of victims’ supporters to begin changing the attitudes of the public at large and of various professionals. Similarly, successfully introducing legislation to recognize the battered woman as a legitimate victim in need of protection and assistance was not an easy task.

Victim blaming assigns the victim a share of responsibility for what took place because of facilitation, precipitation, and provocation. Victim blaming is affecting all areas of victimology including sexual assault, spouse abuse, child abuse, elder abuse, victims of identity theft, and homicide victims. On the other hand, victim defending rejects as unfair any attempt to hold the injured party responsible for what happened.

Victim blaming challenges the legal categories of “completely guilty” and “totally innocent,” particularly if precipitation and provocation are considered. Basically, victim blaming stresses that the innocent or guilty categories may be a distortion of reality. It assumes that the victim and the offenders are not always totally distinct, opposite entities, that they can be related through mutual-ity, symbiosis, or reciprocity (Von Hentig 1948).

According to Ryan (1971), victim blaming involves a three-stage process:

1. First, it is assumed that there is something wrong with the victims, that they are significantly different from the people who have never been victimized.
2. These differences are the root source of the victims’ plight. If these differences did not exist, if they were like everyone else, then they would not be victimized.
3. Victims are advised that, if they want to avoid future problems, they must modify how they think and act. They must give up those behavior patterns that caused their victimization in the first place.

Deeply held beliefs stemming from America’s puritan roots stressing personal responsibility and accountability are at the foundations of the U.S. legal system and these beliefs also influence how most people think of human conduct. Most people take it for granted that we all exercise considerable control over our actions and our lives. Similarly, it is said, citizens who are aware of their vulnerability to crime should examine their lifestyle and routine activities so that they can improve their personal safety. This, of course, also places a responsibility on them so that if anything goes wrong and they are victimized, it must be because they failed to act properly or prudently (Karmen 2004:110–114). This approach to crime and victimization is also rooted in what is called the “just world theory,” which says that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get. One of the first and most prominent proponents of this theory was Lerner (1965), who argued that if one follows the rules, nothing negative will happen to him,

but if it does, then the problem was caused by breaking some rules.

### **Practical Applications of Victim Blaming versus Victim Defending**

Given the above orientation, one application of this approach to assessing the role of the victim is identity theft. Another area of victim blaming is promoted by those with a vested interest is auto theft. Insurance companies have an interest in blaming the victim for this type of theft occurring so as to reduce or deny insurance claims. This discourse is even more sensitive when it comes to sexual assault and rape. In this case, the victim-defending voices, originating mostly in the feminist and women’s movement camps, are quite strong and the consequences of each perspective are important. If the victim-blaming camp succeeds in influencing law and policy, then, first, the rapist can be considered less guilty and therefore deserving of a milder punishment. Second, women, especially young women, must be more cautious and also communicate their wishes, desires, and standards clearly. In other words, the burden of controlling men’s sexuality is still the woman’s. Third, the burden of preventing a rape falls predominantly on the woman and not on aggressive males and sexual predators. Her behavior can be used as a defense to the point of claiming implied consent (Schur 1984; Marciniak 1999). Society also benefits from the victim-blaming perspective prevailing because, instead of having to provide more and better police protection, programs to change cultural values and beliefs leading to rape prevention can place the burden and the blame on women in general and the victims in particular (Viano 1989:5–9).

Each approach holds profound implications affecting the definition and nature of crime itself. The victim-blaming camp stresses sexual assault as a crime of passion, of sexual desire unleashed by the provocative and misleading behavior of the woman or at least by miscommunication and misunderstanding between the genders. The victim-defending camp sees sexual assault as an act of aggression motivated by anger, hatred, and the desire to dominate, subjugate, and control women. Victim defending consequently rejects the crime-prevention advice and training offered to women not only as unwarranted interventions into their lifestyle and personal enjoyment but as a setup to then later blame the victim for not having followed the advice given and thereby causing the crime to occur (Doerner and Lab 2002:10–13; Karmen 2004:110–114).

### **Domestic Violence**

Violence between intimate partners has been the object of research, analysis, policy formulation, and legal and administration of justice reform on a sustained basis during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Sociological perspectives and research tools have substantially

contributed to the development of the field in a number of ways (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980).

One such area of interest and heated debate is the extent of spousal violence. The redesigned NCVS provides better and more reliable information than previous attempts to measure how much intimate violence is there. The expression "intimate partner violence" includes violent episodes involving current as well as former spouses, boyfriends, and girlfriends. In general, females are more likely to experience harm inflicted by their intimates. These events at times escalate into lethal confrontations. Only about half of victims, both female and male, report the crime to the police. The main reason for not reporting the victimization to the authorities is fear of retaliation from the offending partner (Rennison and Welchans 2000:7).

Spousal violence is not limited to women being abused by men. Instances of women abusing their mates and of gay and lesbian violence against a partner are noteworthy. When the notion of women attacking men was first introduced (Steinmetz 1977–1978), many dismissed it as a "red herring" or a misleading distortion of the real problem, men's violence against women. In particular, feminists did not accept this idea because it does not fit into their analysis of power and gender relations that emphasize men's forced dominion and control of women. For the same reason, the notion of lesbian violence against a partner was also initially dismissed. It took a while for this type of violence to be recognized as real and for its victims to receive support and assistance. Instead of looking at the issue of spouse abuse along gender lines, it is more useful to recast it in terms of domestic violence or intimate partner violence and direct attention and research to violence within intimate relationships (Viano 1992b).

The initial point when society normally becomes aware of and involved in an episode of domestic violence is when the police are called. Police officers responding to a call of domestic violence have a number of alternatives. Among them are mediation; referral to a minister, a counselor, or to a social services agency; separating the quarreling parties; and ordering one of the parties out of the house for a "cooling off" period.

Traditionally, many police departments followed a strategy of minimal intervention in this type of cases (Hines and Malley-Morrison 2005:159–192). Advocates of victims and women's organizations have insisted for a long time that the police need to take a more proactive role in addressing domestic violence incidents. They have especially called for the police to arrest the accused batterer rather than employing nonarrest alternatives. The assumption is that arrest will deter future abuse more effectively than nonarrest measures. There is support for this approach as shown in the Minneapolis Police Department study (Sherman, 1986, 1992).

The goal of the study was to determine how effective various types of police responses were in preventing the repetition of domestic violence. These responses included (1) automatic arrest, (2) having one party leave

for a cooling off period, and (3) counseling and referral to a social service agency. The data indicated that police returned to 26 percent of the homes where they had issued a warning and the parties had been separated for a brief cooling off period, 18 percent in the case of counseling and referral to a social service agency, and only 13 percent when there had been an arrest. These data attracted attention because they contradicted the commonsense belief that arrest can seriously aggravate an already tense situation and is counterproductive and that minimal police intervention represents the best course of action.

Victim advocates and women's organizations lauded the project results as a clear indication of which policy police departments should follow and lobbied for changes in the law mandating arrest in these types of cases. While academics found flaws in the experiment, growing public pressure generated a strong demand for changes in the laws and police enforcement policies.

As a result of the Minneapolis experiment and the pressure brought to bear by women's advocates, police departments attempted to take away the officers' discretion and forbid selective enforcement in domestic violence cases. Mandatory arrest or pro-arrest policies were adopted stipulating that police officers must make an arrest whenever it is feasible in a domestic violence situation. Some departments adopted presumptive arrest policies that assume that an arrest will be made in every case. A decision not to arrest must be justified in writing. Probable cause requirements are still in force. Failure to conform to agency rules and regulations can result in disciplinary action and even dismissal from the force.

Although the police seem to resent this encroachment on their discretion (Steinman 1991), there are also indications that officers do not apply the mandatory arrest policies. There have also been complaints and even lawsuits by arrestees claiming unfair discrimination in that if they were not males they would not have been arrested. As a consequence, some police departments have shifted from a mandatory arrest policy to a preference for an arrest (Doerner and Lab 2002:165–174).

The Minneapolis experiment is one of the better known examples of how sociological research can affect public policy and governmental practices and influence legal reform. But the six replication studies conducted later failed to confirm the Minneapolis findings. Regardless, while its conclusions need to be considerably nuanced, the experiment demonstrates how sociological research can make a considerable difference and be effective in introducing change (Viano 1989:11–13).

### Child Abuse and Neglect

The mistreatment of children is another one of the social "discoveries" of the second half of the twentieth century. Until recently, children had no special legal safeguards. During the nineteenth century, the only legal

remedy available in the United States was invoking laws forbidding cruelty to animals. It was only during the latter part of the twentieth century that child abuse was recognized as maltreatment, laws for protecting children were enacted, programs to address and prevent the problem were introduced, and public awareness awakened (Doerner and Lab 2002:199).

Research in this area revolves around four major questions: (1) How widespread or prevalent is child abuse and neglect? (2) What are the correlates of child maltreatment? (3) What causes people to mistreat children? (4) What are the long-term consequences of child abuse and neglect?

Question number 4 is particularly relevant because it points to an intergenerational cycle of violence. People with histories of physical abuse in childhood usually experience problems in their financial, emotional, social, marital, and behavioral functioning. Most of the long-term effects research in these areas has been conducted on aggressive and antisocial acts, studies that show people with a history of being physically abused as a child are at increased risk for being arrested for a violent crime and for being repeat offenders (Widom 1989). Females are also more likely to become prostitutes (Widom and Kuhns 1996) and become involved in other forms of sexual risk-taking behaviors (Herrenkohl et al. 1998). Women and men who were so abused also have a higher tendency to abuse alcohol and drugs (Langeland and Hartgers 1998). Both men and women are also likely to be diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder (Luntz and Widom 1994). Persons with such past history are also at increased risk for physically abusing their children and significant others (Kalmuss 1984; Kaufman and Zigler 1987; Widom 1989; Marshall and Rose 1990; Straus and Smith 1990) or for becoming victims of spousal abuse (Cappell and Heiner 1990). There are other areas affected by being physically abused as a child: lower intelligence and reading ability (Perez and Widom 1994) and health problems (Lesserman et al. 1997), including chronic pain (Goldberg, Pachas, and Keith 1999). A 17-year longitudinal study shows that physically abused people are at increased risk for depressive and anxious symptoms, emotional-behavior problems, and suicide attempts (Silverman, Reinherz, and Giaconia 1996).

### **Elderly Abuse**

The most recent concern to emerge in victimology is elder victimization, with Steinmetz (1978) generally being credited with introducing the idea of elder abuse into the contemporary victimology discourse. Older people are a rapidly expanding segment of the population, particularly

in advanced countries. In the United States, in 1900, the elderly were only 2 percent of the population. By 2030, they will constitute approximately 20 percent of the population (Administration on Aging 1997). Thus, the number of potential elderly victims will continue to increase.

Elderly victimization study continues to undergo the process of defining its parameters. Generally, it is divided into two major areas: criminal victimization and elder maltreatment. In general, one can say that of all the age groups in society, the elderly are the least likely to become victims of crime. However, there is considerable concern and fear of crime affecting the elderly. In other words, there is a discrepancy between the objective level of victimization and the subjective perception about the probability of becoming a victim. This fear-crime paradox has attracted considerable attention and debate in the social science community. Reaching a solution is not easy since there is not yet a universally accepted definition of fear. Possible risk factors also have to be identified. Vulnerability is a key concern of the elderly. There is also little agreement on exactly what constitutes abuse and neglect.

When it comes to elder victimization, victimologists are just beginning to sort out the intricacies of the problem, define the terminology, explore its root causes, and provide some solutions. Sociology can and should contribute to the advancement of the discourse on elderly victimization (Doerner and Lab 2002:233–245).

### **PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

The future of victimology is quite promising. There is still much to be learned about the plight of the victims. New topics for research are ripe for exploration, but there is considerable work to be done with definitions and parameters. Exciting new initiatives such as Victim-Offender Reconciliation Programs, Restorative Justice, and Victims' Rights need to be evaluated and analyzed. Considerable empirical research is needed to advance our understanding, intervention, and prevention of various types of victimization. Longitudinal studies will be especially valuable to measure the long-term impact of victimization, its costs to society, and how we can best assist the victims and limit the damage to society. The large amounts of data now available through various clearinghouses offer valuable information awaiting future analyses. Sociology has played a very important and valuable role to date in the development of victimology studies. Sociology also has a great deal to contribute to its future growth, relevance, and impact on society.

# VOLUME TWO NOTES

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## Specialty Fields

### PART I: NONTRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES, THEORY, AND METHODOLOGY

#### *Chapter 1. The Sociology of Nonhuman Animals and Society*

1. In a recent article, a well-known organizational sociologist (Perrow 2000) expressed concern about the rising interest in human-animal relationships within the American Sociological Association as demonstrated by the attempt of a group of members to form a section on “Animals and Society” and referred to the substantive area as a “boutique issue.”

2. For additional examples of consumer research oriented discussions of human-animal relationships see the special issue of *Society and Animals* edited by Clinton Sanders and Elizabeth Hirschman (1996).

3. For an overview of the recent history of human-animal studies see Hines (2003).

4. The Society and Animals Forum ([www.PsyETA.org](http://www.PsyETA.org)) lists 10 university-based centers devoted to human-animal studies.

5. [www.hsus.org/animals\\_in\\_research/animals\\_in\\_education/animals\\_society\\_an\\_annotated\\_list\\_of\\_courses](http://www.hsus.org/animals_in_research/animals_in_education/animals_society_an_annotated_list_of_courses)

6. In 1987 Aline and Robert Kidd (1987) called for the development of theories explicitly directed at human-animal relationships. They advocated this as a necessary step in establishing human-animal studies as a “science” and bemoaned the fact that, for the most part, the theoretical perspectives then employed were largely imported from preexisting psychological and sociological theories of human-with-human interactions and relationships.

7. An illustration of the methodological approaches employed within the larger field of human-animal studies is seen in examining the 82 presentations and posters listed in the program of 2004 meeting of the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations held in Glasgow, Scotland. Of the presentations and posters in which methodology was identifiable, 38 percent ( $N = 31$ ) employed survey techniques, 23 percent ( $N = 19$ ) involved ethnographic or interview approaches (two of these were studies by sociologists and

involved field research), and 15 percent ( $N = 12$ ) were based on some form of observation (usually within clinical or therapeutic settings). The remainder employed content analysis (including analysis of videotaped interactions), experimental approaches, and testing of serum and body fluids.

8. For additional prescriptions about the research agenda of human-animal studies, see Alger and Alger (2003a:205–211), Bryant (1993), and Beck and Katcher (2003).

9. American Sociological Association Animals and Society section Web site: [www.asanet.org/sectionanimals/why.html](http://www.asanet.org/sectionanimals/why.html)

#### *Chapter 2. Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis*

1. For Garfinkel (1996, 2002), “formal analysis” means roughly all standard science that is based on the separate sets of methods. He does not provide any clear definition of “formal analysis.” Garfinkel has been criticized on the basis that (1) sciences differ crucially in their formality—for instance, Is ethnography a formal approach? (Wilson 2003) and (2) all sciences, including ethnomethodology, have to rely on some methods, hence they all are formal to some degree (Clayman and Maynard 1995).

2. In conversation analysis, this “all interactional social behavior that typically includes talk” is commonly abbreviated to “talk-in-interaction.”

3. A question invites an answer; a greeting invites a greeting, etc. This is the basic idea of adjacency and adjacency pairs, which consists of the first pair part making the production of the second pair part conditionally relevant (see Schegloff and Sacks 1973).

4. The term “reverse engineering” originally comes from a special field of engineering that deciphers how complex structures, such as pyramids or gothic churches, were built in the first place.

5. Conversation analysis (CA) holds the view that speech is an organized whole and not just a random source of errors (cf. Chomsky 1965). This view connects CA to the debates on “grammaticalization” and “emergence” of linguistic structures (see Hopper and Traugott 2003).

6. “Repairable” is a technical term that refers to the source of the repair. A repairable item is not necessarily an error but any



feature that the subsequent repair marks as the trouble source, such as “I had wanted to.” Through a repair the speaker may achieve an alternation of a conveyed meaning even if the original item was not false in any independent sense. Sometimes a distinction is drawn between repairs and corrections that handle errors having an independent existence (see Schegloff et al. 1977).

### Chapter 4. Humanist Sociology

1. Although Max Weber and Georg Simmel offered alternatives to positivism, they did not, except as private citizens, embrace a moral imperative.

2. An irony here is that although Sumner was an ordained minister and a practicing Christian, his sociology was devoid of any religious or moral underpinnings.

3. Jane Addams was baptized at the age of 27 and saw this as more of a joining of a community than as a religious commitment (Linn [1937] 2000).

4. Deegan (1988:161) offers the interesting interpretation that although Park and Burgess’s quarrel was with the religiosity of the early male Chicago sociologists, they did not openly confront them on this point and instead attacked Jane Addams and the women of Hull-House as unscientific social workers.

5. Although Small and Giddings were at odds regarding the direction that sociological research should take, and there is evidence of personal animosity between them (see Bannister 1987), neither wavered in his commitment to a Christian-based sociology and its use in spreading the social gospel.

6. Space limitations preclude the inclusion of such others as Luther Barnard (1881–1951), Robert Lynd (1892–1970), Pitirim Sorokin (1889–1968), and Willard Waller (1899–1945), who also kept the humanistic tradition alive.

7. Mills’s B.A. and M.A. from the University of Texas were in philosophy. He chose to do doctoral work in sociology at the University of Wisconsin because the sociology department offered him a larger fellowship than he was offered in philosophy (Scimecca 1977).

8. Lee also was a cofounder of another sociological association, the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), in 1953. In addition, he was elected to the presidency of the American Sociological Association in 1976 as a write-in candidate.

### Chapter 5. Feminist Methodologies and Epistemology

1. Although Harding refers to the third stream as “transitional” epistemologies in her earlier work (Harding 1987b), she later refers to this category as “postmodern” epistemologies (see Harding 1991).

2. Empiricism is the view that experience provides the sole, or at least the primary, justification for all knowledge. From the classical empiricists to some early twentieth-century theorists, empiricists held that the content of experience could be described in fixed, basic, theory-neutral terms—for example, in terms of sense data. Philosophy was regarded as a discipline that could provide a transcendent or external justification for empirical or scientific methods. Quine (1969) revolutionized empiricism by rejecting both these ideas. Quine argued that observation is

thoroughly theory laden. It is cast in terms of complex concepts that cannot be immediately given in experience, all of which are potentially subject to revision in light of further experience.

3. Part of the problem with understanding feminist empiricism is that Harding initially provided such a slim and distorted picture of what this was. Indeed as argued by sociologist Gregor McLennan (1995), “Given her initial characterization of what empiricism involves, it comes as no surprise that Harding can find no real life advocates of feminist empiricism” (p. 394). In her later work, Harding (1991, 1993a) distinguished between the “original spontaneous” feminist empiricism and a recent philosophical version as found, she notes, in her fellow authors (Longino 1993; Nelson 1993) in the collection titled *Feminist Epistemologies*. Here, she acknowledges that Longino and Nelson “have developed sophisticated and valuable feminist empiricist philosophies of science” (Harding 1993a:51).

4. The difficulty with describing feminist standpoint is that there are many versions of it (Harding 1987b, 1991, 1993a; Hartsock 1983, 1985; Jaggar 1983; Rose 1983; Smith 1974, 1987, 1999) and it has been widely critiqued (e.g., Flax 1990; Hekman 1997; Walby 2001). Feminist standpoint epistemology has been criticized for implying there is an essential woman (Collins 2000), for giving epistemic privilege to gender oppression over other kinds of oppressions (Bar On 1993), for prioritizing the “unique abilities of the oppressed to produce knowledge” (Harding 1991:57), and for assuming that the “standpoints” of the oppressed have not been tainted by dominant ideologies (Flax 1990; Hawkesworth 1989; Holmwood 1995).

5. Ann Oakley (1998, 2000) has since qualified her views on this.

6. Harding (1991, 1993a) writes about the links between “strong reflexivity” and “strong objectivity” in the construction of feminist epistemologies. Specifically, she argues,

A notion of *strong objectivity* [italics added] would require that the objects of inquiry be conceptualized as gazing back in all their cultural particularity and that the researcher, through theory and methods, stand behind them, gazing back at his own socially situated research project in all its cultural particularity and its relationship to other projects of his culture—many of which . . . can be seen only from locations far away from the scientist’s actual daily work. (Harding 1991:163)

### Chapter 6. Feminist Theories

1. As Eldridge et al. (2000) point out, feminism is not the only social movement to have challenged sociology’s partial standpoint: for example, “as sociology became the chosen discipline for members of disenfranchised groups entering the academy, its own partisanship was unmasked” (p. 4).

2. Stories of their appearances, their experiences, their demands, and the resistance to those demands are legion, though for the most part unwritten (Laslett and Thorne 1997; Hamilton 1984, 2003).

3. This is, of course, similar to all theoretical traditions, though not always as acknowledged as in Alan Sica’s (1995) recent comment: “Theoretical action . . . it’s in that part of the Magical Theory bibliotheque where history, philosophy, aesthetics, nonexperimental psychology, aesthetics, nonexperimental psychology, ethics, economics, and politics share some common turf” (p. 6).

4. See the articles in England (1993). The editor's question "how do various sociological theories understand gender differentiation and gender inequality" is addressed sequentially for the following theoretical perspectives: Marxism, world system theory, macrostructural theories, rational-choice theory, neofunctionalism, psychoanalytic theory, ethnomethodology, expectation states theory, a poststructuralist version of symbolic interactionism, and network theory. See also Wallace's (1989) earlier collection.

5. Recently, feminist sociology has become an obligatory "fourth" perspective in introductory textbooks, along with conflict theory, (neo)functionalism, and symbolic interactionism.

6. A considerable literature, however, provides evidence that women's quest for equality makes advances during revolutionary periods when their support for the cause is most needed after which the status quo ante is reintroduced.

7. See, however, Parsons's student, Miriam Johnson's cogent argument (1989:102) that Parsons provided a description of, not a prescription for, a patriarchal family structure. Her argument is similar in this respect to that made by Juliet Mitchell about Sigmund Freud's theories in her pathbreaking book *Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (1974), namely that Freud had offered a description of how patriarchal relationships reproduced themselves, a description that feminists needed if they were going to successfully transform society.

8. In his magisterial work on race "relations," *The American Dilemma*, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal (1944) included an appendix analyzing the similarities and differences between the relations between the races and those between the sexes.

9. Several feminist sociologists, however, detect more than a tilt away from transformative goals by feminist theorists as their careers and writings become institutionalized and successful (Stacey 1997; Stanley 2000:64).

10. Ironically, in most sociological work (as in the culture generally), gender became a synonym for "sex" and all the efforts to distinguish sex and gender seemed in vain.

11. "In response, such biased theories may continue," Ward (1993a) argues, "without input from frustrated gender researchers who may pursue a more inclusive form of theory generation of their own. The eventual result may be two bodies of theories: those generated by the feminist critiques and those prefeminist theories that have remained unresponsive and untransformed by the feminist critiques. These implications are already apparent in world systems research and in sociology more generally . . . neither so-called classical sociological theory nor world system theory is drawn upon in much of the new feminist sociology" (p. 60).

12. See Leslie McCall's (2005) interesting attempt to describe three approaches to intersectionality: what she calls anti-categorical complexity (poststructuralist), intracategorical complexity, and intercategorical complexity.

13. In France and Britain, feminists have mainly worked with versions of Jacques Lacan's system while in the United States object relations perspectives developed especially by Nancy Chodorow and Jessica Benjamin have been favored especially by sociologists (Kurzweil 1989; Barrett 1992).

14. "In this regard," Bhavnani (1996) argues, "feminist theory has been a driving force in sociology [although] feminist epistemologies are [far from] hegemonic in sociology. [One] glance at the AJS and the ASR [reveals] that there is no inkling of a struggle over the epistemological meaning of sociology" (p. 7).

## PART III: THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE LIFE COURSE

### Chapter 19. *The Sociology of Death and Dying*

1. This section draws heavily on the definitive history of death education by Pine (1977) and Doka's (2003) detailed exposition on the death awareness movement.

2. As an aside, *Sociological Symposium* continued to be published at Western Kentucky University for several years. In 1972, Clifton Bryant moved to Virginia Tech University, and the journal was transferred there, where it was published for another 10 years or so and ultimately merged with the journal *Sociological Forum* to become a new journal, *Sociological Spectrum*, which was to be the official journal of the Mid-South Sociological Association.

## PART IV: THE SOCIOLOGY OF NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR

### Chapter 24. *The Sociology of Sport*

1. Review essays of this type are inevitably personally positioned and, in relatively small fields of study, such as the sociology of sport, it is also inevitable that the author has been personally involved in the developments described. The approach taken here to the sociology of sport also has a North American and Anglophone bias, justifiable, in part, because the vast majority of research in the sociology of sport derives from Anglophone North America, the U.K. and Australia.

2. Parts of the following are adapted from Donnelly (2003).

3. Parts of the following are adapted from Ingham and Donnelly (1997).

## PART V: CREATIVE BEHAVIOR

### Chapter 28. *The Sociology of Knowledge*

1. It is possible, of course, to write that the history of the sociology of knowledge extends back to Plato and Aristotle, through to Kant, Bacon, Nietzsche, Hegel, Dilthey, and Feuerbach (see, e.g., Gouldner 1965; Horowitz 1976). We don't debate this, but this far-reaching history is beyond the scope of this chapter. For a useful discussion of the notion of canons, founders, and classics, see Baehr (2002).

2. The work of Alexis de Tocqueville ([1863] 1964) is often overlooked as an important structural account of knowledge. Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* argued that the material relations of production in America were based on a large middle class of farmers, small shop owners, and craftsmen. This meant that the abstract thought associated with the European scholarly elite was largely dismissed in favor of a practical knowledge associated with trade and industry. Furthermore, the "habits of the heart" (Bellah et al. 1985) associated with American individualism, which are still seen so strong today, resulted from these early economic relations characterized by a burgeoning middle class.

3. Baudrillard renewed the Frankfurt School's interests in consumption over production as the major force in Western society. However, rather than acting like cultural dupes of mass culture, as the Frankfurt theorists had supposed, scholars such as Beck and Giddens (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994) show that people are active, informed consumers, creating their own unique conglomerations of media commodities. The Internet, among other things, has helped lead to a new "self-reflexive modernity," whereby space and time begins to collapse and expertise and knowledge has been placed at a higher premium among the populace.

### *Chapter 29. The Sociology of Music*

1. I conducted this search via the keyword option, thereby identifying any article in this online database that contained "music" in its abstract, title, or subject heading. The resulting numbers are not limited to English-language publications.

2. I use "sociology of music" and "music sociology" interchangeably—although some might see these terms as denoting different approaches (see DeNora 2003).

3. Consider that sociological reviews of Weber's oeuvre (e.g., Bendix 1977) often remain mostly (if not completely) silent about his musical concerns.

4. Scholars outside of sociology admirably address the responses of female musicians to such barriers—responses that have sometimes gone unnoticed—and make visible the musical production of women across time and various musical genres (e.g., Citron 1993; Tucker 2000).

5. "Sensemaking" can refer both to a specific theory (Weick 1995) and the general process by which organizations interpret their environment. I use the term in the latter sense.

6. Given the global diffusion of rap, it appears that these majors underestimated its potential audience (see Mitchell 1996, 2001, 2003; Elflein 1998; Bennett 1999a, 1999b).

7. This was only one possible solution; the British government, for instance, initially proceeded by owning and operating the entity responsible for radio broadcasting, the BBC (Coase 1950; Leblebici 1995; Ahlqvist 2001).

8. This approach to composition is one thing that initially made the majors uneasy about rap, as it departed from the typical mode of popular music production (Negus 1999).

9. The dominance of majors is not absolute. For instance, they face difficulties in staving off piracy and collecting

remuneration (see Frith and Marshall 2004; Marshall 2004; Leyshon et al. 2005).

10. Early music by African Americans did have its defenders—as Lopes (2002) and Appelrouth (2003) show for jazz. Of course, rap also has its own defenders (see Binder 1993).

## **PART VI: MACROLEVEL ISSUES**

### *Chapter 38. Environmental Sociology*

1. See Freudenburg and Gramling (1994) and Murphy (1999) for examples of particularly rich analyses of how societal and environmental factors interweave to produce both social and environmental outcomes that would be inexplicable by traditional sociological analyses limited to examination of *social* variables.

2. Efforts by WST researchers to show how core nations can protect the quality of their own environments by importing natural resources from noncore nations and exporting pollution and polluting industries to those same nations highlight the importance of distinguishing among the three functions of the environment noted above and of adding an explicit concern with "living space" or geography to the traditional emphasis on ecological "withdrawals and additions" (Bunker 2005; Dunlap and Catton 2002).

3. This is also true of the older POET model to which the IPAT and STIRPAT bear resemblance that was offered as a "framework" for clarifying debates over the sources of environmental problems and examining societal-environmental interactions in general in the early days of environmental sociology (Dunlap and Catton 1979a, 1979b, 1983).

## **PART VII: THE USES OF SOCIOLOGY**

### *Chapter 42. Sociological Practice*

1. This paragraph and the next paragraph draw extensively on Fritz and Clark (1989) and Clark and Fritz (1990).

2. This chapter is a revision of a paper by myself and Judith K. Little (Krause and Little 2000). The ideas in the chapter initially grew out of my contribution to a collaborative project with Robert A. Dentler. See Dentler (2002:chap. 2).

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### PART I: NONTRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVES, THEORY, AND METHODOLOGY

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## PART II: THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE SELF

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## Chapter 16. The Sociology of Men and Masculinity

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## PART III: THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE LIFE COURSE

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## Chapter 19. The Sociology of Death and Dying

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## PART IV: THE SOCIOLOGY OF NORMATIVE BEHAVIOR

### Chapter 20. The Sociology of Consumer Behavior

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## Chapter 22. The Sociology of Food and Eating

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## PART V: CREATIVE BEHAVIOR

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## PART VI: MACROLEVEL ISSUES

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## PART VII: THE USES OF SOCIOLOGY

### Chapter 39. Applied Sociology

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