SOCI 1306: SOCIAL PROBLEMS



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SOCI 1306

Social Problems



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1.1: The Sociological Imagination

The **sociological imagination** is a practice sociologists employ to help recognize and step outside one's personal history and biography to examine a situation, issue, person, or society through an objective eye (Carl 2013). According to C. Wright Mills ([1959] 2000), the sociological imagination requires individuals to "think themselves away." Mills suggests the sociological imagination allows us to examine people and the world from a "new" eye to understand the personal and social influences on people's life choices and outcomes. This practice helps remove personal bias and preconceived notions and opinions to improve acceptance, consideration, and the needs of others. Sociologists must remove the blinders of self-interest and ideology to look at others and the world as they are and not as we perceive them.

1. Consider your career goal and the professional environment you will work in. Describe a situation where you will need to use a formal observational approach to collect data or information to share with your clients or agency where you work.
2. How might using an informal unobtrusive observational approach be helpful in the workplace as a sociological practitioner? What type of knowledge or information can you discover by observing others?
3. Explain how either of these research approaches might improve the development of your sociological imagination or objective eye? Specifically, how might observational data help develop your sociological imagination about 1) a workplace situation, 2) co-workers, 3) a social issue, and 4) a client?

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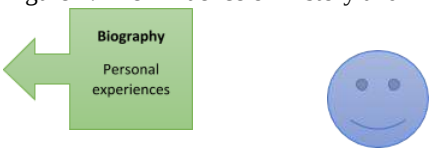
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1.2: History and Biography

Every person analyzes and evaluates the world from a subjective perspective or viewpoint. Subjective concerns rely on judgments rather than external facts. Personal feelings and opinions from a person's history and biography drive subjective concerns. The time period we live (history) and our personal life experiences (biography) influence our perspectives and understanding about others and the social world. Our history and biography guide our perceptions of reality reinforcing our personal bias and subjectivity.



Figure 2. The Influence of History and Biography on Perspective



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Relying on subjective viewpoints and perspectives leads to diffusion of misinformation (inaccurate), disinformation (false or fake), and fallacies (unsound reasoning) that can be detrimental to our physical and socio-cultural environment and negatively impact our perceptions, considerations, and acceptance of others. It takes awareness and deliberate practice to reduce personal bias in our interactions, interpretations, and understanding of others and the social world. We must seek out facts and develop knowledge to enhance our objective eye. By using valid, reliable, proven facts, data, and information, we establish credibility and make sound judgments and better decisions for the world and those we work with and serve.

PERSPECTIVE INFLUENCES

- Describe your dream job in sociology. What are your career goals? How do you want to help and serve people? What changes to you want to make in your community and society?
- According to C. Wright Mills, our history (time we live) and biography (personal experiences) influence our perceptions about the world. Think about the historical and biographical influences on your life and your decision to pursue a career in sociology. Explain how you developed your interest in sociological practice and what led you to pursue a degree in sociology.
- How might your passion to help others be influenced by egocentric ideologies or self-interest? What can you do to have a meaningful career helping others without bias? How will you develop a sociological or objective eye when working with people to address and solve social problems?

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1.3.1: What Is a Social Problem?

Learning Objectives

1. Define “social problem.”
2. Explain the objective and subjective components of the definition of a social problem.
3. Understand the social constructionist view of social problems.
4. List the stages of the natural history of social problems.

A social problem is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed. This definition has both an *objective* component and a *subjective* component.

The *objective* component is this: For any condition or behavior to be considered a social problem, it must have negative consequences for large numbers of people, as each chapter of this book discusses. How do we know if a social problem has negative consequences? Reasonable people can and do disagree on whether such consequences exist and, if so, on their extent and seriousness, but ordinarily a body of data accumulates—from work by academic researchers, government agencies, and other sources—that strongly points to extensive and serious consequences. The reasons for these consequences are often hotly debated, and sometimes, as we shall see in certain chapters in this book, sometimes the very existence of these consequences is disputed. A current example is *climate change*: Although the overwhelming majority of climate scientists say that climate change (changes in the earth’s climate due to the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere) is real and serious, fewer than two-thirds of Americans (64 percent) in a 2011 poll said they “think that global warming is happening”(Leiserowitz, et. al., 2011).

This type of dispute points to the *subjective* component of the definition of social problems: There must be a perception that a condition or behavior needs to be addressed for it to be considered a social problem. This component lies at the heart of the social constructionist view of social problems (Rubington & Weinberg, 2010). In this view, many types of negative conditions and behaviors exist. Many of these are considered sufficiently negative to acquire the status of a social problem; some do not receive this consideration and thus do not become a social problem; and some become considered a social problem only if citizens, policymakers, or other parties call attention to the condition or behavior.



Figure 1.3.1.1: Sometimes disputes occur over whether a particular condition or behavior has negative consequences and is thus a social problem. A current example is climate change: although almost all climate scientists think climate change is real and serious, more than one-third of the American public thinks that climate change is not happening. Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

The history of attention given to rape and sexual assault in the United States before and after the 1970s provides an example of this latter situation. These acts of sexual violence against women have probably occurred from the beginning of humanity and certainly were very common in the United States before the 1970s. Although men were sometimes arrested and prosecuted for rape and sexual assault, sexual violence was otherwise ignored by legal policymakers and received little attention in college textbooks and the news media, and many people thought that rape and sexual assault were just something that happened (Allison & Wrightsman, 1993).Allison, J. A., & Wrightsman, L. S. (1993). *Rape: The misunderstood crime*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Thus although sexual violence existed, it was not considered a social problem. When the contemporary women’s movement began in the

late 1970s, it soon focused on rape and sexual assault as serious crimes and as manifestations of women's inequality. Thanks to this focus, rape and sexual assault eventually entered the public consciousness, views of these crimes began to change, and legal policymakers began to give them more attention. In short, sexual violence against women became a social problem.



Before the 1970s, rape and sexual assault certainly existed and were very common, but they were generally ignored and not considered a social problem. When the contemporary women's movement arose during the 1970s, it focused on sexual violence against women and turned this behavior into a social problem. Image courtesy of Women's eNews, http://www.flickr.com/photos/wenews/5167303294/.

The social constructionist view raises an interesting question: When is a social problem a social problem? According to some sociologists who adopt this view, negative conditions and behaviors are *not* a social problem unless they are recognized as such by policymakers, large numbers of lay citizens, or other segments of our society; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were not a social problem because our society as a whole paid them little attention. Other sociologists say that negative conditions and behaviors *should be* considered a social problem even if they receive little or no attention; these sociologists would thus say that rape and sexual assault before the 1970s were a social problem.

This type of debate is probably akin to the age-old question: If a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, is a sound made? As such, it is not easy to answer, but it does reinforce one of the key beliefs of the social constructionist view: Perception matters at least as much as reality, and sometimes more so. In line with this belief, social constructionism emphasizes that citizens, interest groups, policymakers, and other parties often compete to influence popular perceptions of many types of conditions and behaviors. They try to influence news media coverage and popular views of the nature and extent of any negative consequences that may be occurring, the reasons underlying the condition or behavior in question, and possible solutions to the problem.



Sometimes a condition or behavior becomes a social problem even if there is little or no basis for this perception. A historical example involves women in college. During the late 1800s, medical authorities and other experts warned women not to go to college for two reasons: they feared that the stress of college would disrupt women's menstrual cycles, and they thought that women would not do well on exams while they were menstruating. (Unsplash License; Yustinus Tjiuwanda via Unsplash)

Social constructionism's emphasis on perception has a provocative implication: Just as a condition or behavior may not be considered a social problem even if there is strong basis for this perception, so may a condition or behavior be considered a social problem even if there is little or no basis for this perception. The "issue" of women in college provides a historical example of this latter possibility. In the late 1800s, leading physicians and medical researchers in the United States wrote journal articles, textbooks, and newspaper columns in which they warned women not to go to college. The reason? They feared that the stress of college would disrupt women's menstrual cycles, and they also feared that women would not do well in exams during "that time of the month" (Ehrenreich & English, 2005)!Ehrenreich, B., & English, D. (2005). *For her own good: Two centuries of the experts' advice to women* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Anchor Books. We now know better, of course, but the sexist beliefs of these writers turned the idea of women going to college into a social problem and helped to reinforce restrictions by colleges and universities on the admission of women.

In a related dynamic, various parties can distort certain aspects of a social problem that does exist: politicians can give speeches, the news media can use scary headlines and heavy coverage to capture readers' or viewers' interest, businesses can use advertising and influence news coverage. News media coverage of violent crime provides many examples of this dynamic (Robinson, 2011; Surette, 2011).Robinson, M. B. (2011). *Media coverage of crime and criminal justice*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press; Surette, R. (2011). *Media, crime, and criminal justice: Images, realities, and policies* (4th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. The news media overdramatize violent crime, which is far less common than property crime like burglary and larceny, by featuring so many stories about it, and this coverage contributes to public fear of crime. Media stories about violent crime also tend to be more common when the accused offender is black and the victim is white and when the offender is a juvenile. This type of coverage is thought to heighten the public's prejudice toward African Americans and to contribute to negative views about teenagers.

The Natural History of a Social Problem

We have just discussed some of the difficulties in defining a social problem and the fact that various parties often try to influence public perceptions of social problems. These issues aside, most social problems go through a *natural history* consisting of several stages of their development (Spector & Kitsuse, 2001).Spector, M., & Kitsuse, J. I. (2001). *Constructing social problems*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Stage 1: Emergence and Claims Making

A social problem emerges when a social entity (such as a social change group, the news media, or influential politicians) begins to call attention to a condition or behavior that it perceives to be undesirable and in need of remedy. As part of this process, it tries to

influence public perceptions of the problem, the reasons for it, and possible solutions to it. Because the social entity is making claims about all these matters, this aspect of Stage 1 is termed the **claims-making process**. Not all efforts to turn a condition or behavior into a social problem succeed, and if they do not succeed, a social problem does not emerge. Because of the resources they have or do not have, some social entities are more likely than others to succeed at this stage. A few ordinary individuals have little influence in the public sphere, but masses of individuals who engage in protest or other political activity have greater ability to help a social problem emerge. Because politicians have the ear of the news media and other types of influence, their views about social problems are often very influential. Most studies of this stage of a social problem focus on the efforts of social change groups and the larger social movement to which they may belong, as most social problems begin with bottom-up efforts from such groups.



A social problem emerges when a social change group successfully calls attention to a condition or behavior that it considers serious. Protests like the one depicted here have raised the environmental consciousness of Americans and helped put pressure on businesses to be environmentally responsible. Image courtesy of ItzaFineDay, http://www.flickr.com/photos/itzafineday/3085307050/.

Stage 2: Legitimacy

Once a social group succeeds in turning a condition or behavior into a social problem, it usually tries to persuade the government (local, state, and/or federal) to take some action—spending and policymaking—to address the problem. As part of this effort, it tries to convince the government that its claims about the problem are legitimate—that they make sense and are supported by *empirical* (research-based) evidence. To the extent that the group succeeds in convincing the government of the legitimacy of its claims, government action is that much more likely to occur.

Stage 3: Renewed Claims Making

Even if government action does occur, social change groups often conclude that the action is too limited in goals or scope to be able to successfully address the social problem. If they reach this conclusion, they often decide to press their demands anew. They do so by reasserting their claims and by criticizing the official response they have received from the government or other established interests, such as big businesses. This stage may involve a fair amount of tension between the social change groups and these targets of their claims.

Stage 4: Development of Alternative Strategies

Despite the renewed claims making, social change groups often conclude that the government and established interests are not responding adequately to their claims. Although the groups may continue to press their claims, they nonetheless realize that these claims may fail to win an adequate response from established interests. This realization leads them to develop their own strategies for addressing the social problem.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The definition of a social problem has both an objective component and a subjective component. The objective component involves empirical evidence of the negative consequences of a social condition or behavior, while the subjective component involves the perception that the condition or behavior is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed.
- The social constructionist view emphasizes that a condition or behavior does not become a social problem unless there is a perception that it should be considered a social problem.

- The natural history of a social problem consists of four stages: emergence and claims making, legitimacy, renewed claims making, and alternative strategies.

FOR YOUR REVIEW

1. What do you think is the most important social problem facing our nation right now? Explain your answer.
2. Do you agree with the social constructionist view that a negative social condition or behavior is not a social problem unless there is a perception that it should be considered a social problem? Why or why not?

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1.3.2: Sociological Perspectives on Social Problems

Learning Objectives

1. Define the sociological imagination.
2. Explain what is meant by the blaming-the-victim belief.
3. Summarize the most important beliefs and assumptions of functionalism and conflict theory.
4. Summarize the most important beliefs and assumptions of symbolic interactionism and exchange theory.

The sociological understanding of social problems rests heavily on the concept of the *sociological imagination*. We discuss this concept in some detail before turning to various theoretical perspectives that provide a further context for understanding social problems.

The Sociological Imagination

Many individuals experience one or more social problems personally. For example, many people are poor and unemployed, many are in poor health, and many have family problems, drink too much alcohol, or commit crime. When we hear about these individuals, it is easy to think that their problems are theirs alone, and that they and other individuals with the same problems are entirely to blame for their difficulties.

Sociology takes a different approach, as it stresses that individual problems are often rooted in problems stemming from aspects of society itself. This key insight informed C. Wright Mills's (1959) (Mills, 1959) classic distinction between personal troubles and public issues. *Personal troubles* refer to a problem affecting individuals that the affected individual, as well as other members of society, typically blame on the individual's own personal and moral failings. Examples include such different problems as eating disorders, divorce, and unemployment. *Public issues*, whose source lies in the social structure and culture of a society, refer to social problems affecting many individuals. Problems in society thus help account for problems that individuals experience. Mills felt that many problems ordinarily considered private troubles are best understood as public issues, and he coined the term sociological imagination to refer to the ability to appreciate the structural basis for individual problems.

To illustrate Mills's viewpoint, let's use our sociological imaginations to understand some contemporary social problems. We will start with unemployment, which Mills himself discussed. If only a few people were unemployed, Mills wrote, we could reasonably explain their unemployment by saying they were lazy, lacked good work habits, and so forth. If so, their unemployment would be their own personal trouble. But when millions of people are out of work, unemployment is best understood as a public issue because, as Mills (Mills, 1959) put it, "the very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals."



When only a few people are out of work, it is fair to say that their unemployment is their personal trouble. However, when millions of people are out of work, as has been true since the economic downturn began in 2008, this massive unemployment is more accurately viewed as a public issue. As such, its causes lie not in the unemployed individuals but rather in our society's economic and social systems.

Rawle C. Jackman – The line of hope… – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

The high US unemployment rate stemming from the severe economic downturn that began in 2008 provides a telling example of the point Mills was making. Millions of people lost their jobs through no fault of their own. While some individuals are undoubtedly unemployed because they are lazy or lack good work habits, a more structural explanation focusing on lack of opportunity is needed to explain why so many people were out of work. If so, unemployment is best understood as a public issue rather than a personal trouble.

Another social problem is eating disorders. We usually consider a person's eating disorder to be a personal trouble that stems from a lack of control, low self-esteem, or another personal problem. This explanation may be OK as far as it goes, but it does not help us understand why so many people have the personal problems that lead to eating disorders. Perhaps more important, this belief also neglects the larger social and cultural forces that help explain such disorders. For example, most Americans with eating disorders are women, not men. This gender difference forces us to ask what it is about being a woman in American society that makes eating disorders so much more common. To begin to answer this question, we need to look to the standard of beauty for women that emphasizes a slender body (Boyd, et. al., 2011). If this cultural standard did not exist, far fewer American women would suffer from eating disorders than do now. Because it does exist, even if every girl and woman with an eating disorder were cured, others would take their places unless we could somehow change this standard. Viewed in this way, eating disorders are best understood as a public issue, not just as a personal trouble.

Picking up on Mills's insights, William Ryan (1976) (Ryan, 1976) pointed out that Americans typically think that social problems such as poverty and unemployment stem from personal failings of the people experiencing these problems, not from structural problems in the larger society. Using Mills's terms, Americans tend to think of social problems as personal troubles rather than public issues. As Ryan put it, they tend to believe in blaming the victim rather than blaming the system.

To help us understand a blaming-the-victim ideology, let's consider why poor children in urban areas often learn very little in their schools. According to Ryan, a blaming-the-victim approach would say the children's parents do not care about their learning, fail to teach them good study habits, and do not encourage them to take school seriously. This type of explanation, he wrote, may apply to some parents, but it ignores a much more important reason: the sad shape of America's urban schools, which, he said, are overcrowded, decrepit structures housing old textbooks and out-of-date equipment. To improve the schooling of children in urban areas, he wrote, we must improve the schools themselves and not just try to "improve" the parents.

As this example suggests, a blaming-the-victim approach points to solutions to social problems such as poverty and illiteracy that are very different from those suggested by a more structural approach that blames the system. If we blame the victim, we would spend our limited dollars to address the personal failings of individuals who suffer from poverty, illiteracy, poor health, eating disorders, and other difficulties. If instead we blame the system, we would focus our attention on the various social conditions (decrepit schools, cultural standards of female beauty, and the like) that account for these difficulties. A sociological understanding suggests that the latter approach is ultimately needed to help us deal successfully with the social problems facing us today.

Theoretical Perspectives

Three theoretical perspectives guide sociological thinking on social problems: *functionalist* theory, *conflict* theory, and *symbolic interactionist* theory. These perspectives look at the same social problems, but they do so in different ways. Their views taken together offer a fuller understanding of social problems than any of the views can offer alone. Table 1.1 "Theory Snapshot" summarizes the three perspectives.

Table 1.1 Theory Snapshot

Theoretical perspective	Major assumptions	Views of social problems

Theoretical perspective	Major assumptions	Views of social problems
Functionalism	Social stability is necessary for a strong society, and adequate socialization and social integration are necessary for social stability. Society's social institutions perform important functions to help ensure social stability. Slow social change is desirable, but rapid social change threatens social order.	Social problems weaken a society's stability but do not reflect fundamental faults in how the society is structured. Solutions to social problems should take the form of gradual social reform rather than sudden and far-reaching change. Despite their negative effects, social problems often also serve important functions for society.
Conflict theory	Society is characterized by pervasive inequality based on social class, race, gender, and other factors. Far-reaching social change is needed to reduce or eliminate social inequality and to create an egalitarian society.	Social problems arise from fundamental faults in the structure of a society and both reflect and reinforce inequalities based on social class, race, gender, and other dimensions. Successful solutions to social problems must involve far-reaching change in the structure of society.
Symbolic interactionism	People construct their roles as they interact; they do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them. As this interaction occurs, individuals negotiate their definitions of the situations in which they find themselves and socially construct the reality of these situations. In so doing, they rely heavily on symbols such as words and gestures to reach a shared understanding of their interaction.	Social problems arise from the interaction of individuals. People who engage in socially problematic behaviors often learn these behaviors from other people. Individuals also learn their perceptions of social problems from other people.

Functionalism

Functionalism, also known as the functionalist theory or perspective, arose out of two great revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The first was the French Revolution of 1789, whose intense violence and bloody terror shook Europe to its core. The aristocracy throughout Europe feared that revolution would spread to their own lands, and intellectuals feared that social order was crumbling.

The Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century reinforced these concerns. Starting first in Europe and then in the United States, the Industrial Revolution led to many changes, including the rise and growth of cities as people left their farms to live near factories. As the cities grew, people lived in increasingly poor, crowded, and decrepit conditions, and crime was rampant. Here was additional evidence, if European intellectuals needed it, of the breakdown of social order.

In response, the intellectuals began to write that a strong society, as exemplified by strong social bonds and rules and effective socialization, was needed to prevent social order from disintegrating. Without a strong society and effective socialization, they warned, social order breaks down, and violence and other signs of social disorder result.

This general framework reached fruition in the writings of Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), a French scholar largely responsible for the sociological perspective, as we now know it. Adopting the conservative intellectuals' view of the need for a strong society, Durkheim felt that human beings have desires that result in chaos unless society limits them (Durkheim, 1952). It does so, he wrote, through two related social mechanisms: socialization and social integration. Socialization helps us learn society's rules and the need to cooperate, as people end up generally agreeing on important norms and values, while social integration, or our ties to other people and to social institutions such as religion and the family, helps socialize us and integrate us into society and reinforce our respect for its rules.

Today's functionalist perspective arises out of Durkheim's work and that of other conservative intellectuals of the nineteenth century. It uses the human body as a model for understanding society. In the human body, our various organs and other body parts serve important *functions* for the ongoing health and stability of our body. Our eyes help us see, our ears help us hear, our heart

circulates our blood, and so forth. Just as we can understand the body by describing and understanding the functions that its parts serve for its health and stability, so can we understand society by describing and understanding the functions that its parts—or, more accurately, its social institutions—serve for the ongoing health and stability of society. Thus functionalism emphasizes the importance of social institutions such as the family, religion, and education for producing a stable society.



Émile Durkheim was a founder of sociology and is largely credited with developing the functionalist perspective. (Marxists.org – public domain.)

Similar to the view of the conservative intellectuals from which it grew, functionalism is skeptical of rapid social change and other major social upheaval. The analogy to the human body helps us understand this skepticism. In our bodies, any sudden, rapid change is a sign of danger to our health. If we break a bone in one of our legs, we have trouble walking; if we lose sight in both our eyes, we can no longer see. Slow changes, such as the growth of our hair and our nails, are fine and even normal, but sudden changes like those just described are obviously troublesome. By analogy, sudden and rapid changes in society and its social institutions are troublesome according to the functionalist perspective. If the human body evolved to its present form and functions because these made sense from an evolutionary perspective, so did society evolve to its present form and functions because these made sense. Any sudden change in society thus threatens its stability and future.

As these comments might suggest, functionalism views social problems as arising from society's natural evolution. When a social problem does occur, it might threaten a society's stability, but it does not mean that fundamental flaws in the society exist. Accordingly, gradual social reform should be all that is needed to address the social problem.

Functionalism even suggests that social problems must be functional in some ways for society, because otherwise these problems would not continue. This is certainly a controversial suggestion, but it is true that many social problems do serve important functions for our society. For example, crime is a major social problem, but it is also good for the economy because it creates hundreds of thousands of jobs in law enforcement, courts and corrections, home security, and other sectors of the economy whose major role is to deal with crime. If crime disappeared, many people would be out of work! Similarly, poverty is also a major social problem, but one function that poverty serves is that poor people do jobs that otherwise might not get done because other people would not want to do them (Gans, 1972). Like crime, poverty also provides employment for people across the nation, such as those who work in social service agencies that help poor people.

Conflict Theory

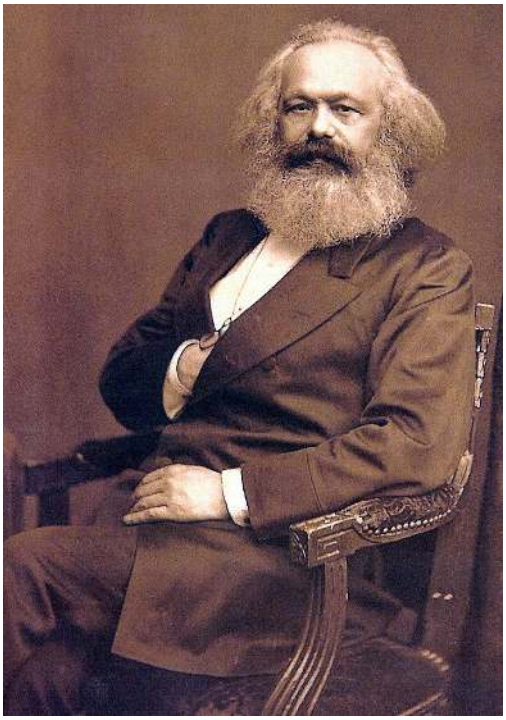
In many ways, conflict theory is the opposite of functionalism but ironically also grew out of the Industrial Revolution, thanks largely to Karl Marx (1818–1883) and his collaborator, Friedrich Engels (1820–1895). Whereas conservative intellectuals feared the mass violence resulting from industrialization, Marx and Engels deplored the conditions they felt were responsible for the mass violence and the capitalist society they felt was responsible for these conditions. Instead of fearing the breakdown of social order that mass violence represented, they felt that revolutionary violence was needed to eliminate capitalism and the poverty and misery they saw as its inevitable results (Marx, 1906; Marx & Engels, 1962).

According to Marx and Engels, every society is divided into two classes based on the ownership of the means of production (tools, factories, and the like). In a capitalist society, the *bourgeoisie*, or ruling class, owns the means of production, while the *proletariat*, or working class, does not own the means of production and instead is oppressed and exploited by the bourgeoisie. This difference creates an automatic conflict of interests between the two groups. Simply put, the bourgeoisie is interested in maintaining its

position at the top of society, while the proletariat's interest lies in rising up from the bottom and overthrowing the bourgeoisie to create an egalitarian society.

In a capitalist society, Marx and Engels wrote, revolution is inevitable because of structural contradictions arising from the very nature of capitalism. Because profit is the main goal of capitalism, the bourgeoisie's interest lies in maximizing profit. To do so, capitalists try to keep wages as low as possible and to spend as little money as possible on working conditions. This central fact of capitalism, said Marx and Engels, eventually prompts the rise of class consciousness, or an awareness of the reasons for their oppression, among workers. Their class consciousness in turn leads them to revolt against the bourgeoisie to eliminate the oppression and exploitation they suffer.

Marx and Engels' view of conflict arising from unequal positions held by members of society lies at the heart of today's conflict theory. This theory emphasizes that different groups in society have different interests stemming from their different social positions. These different interests in turn lead to different views on important social issues. Some versions of the theory root conflict in divisions based on race and ethnicity, gender, and other such differences, while other versions follow Marx and Engels in seeing conflict arising out of different positions in the economic structure. In general, however, conflict theory emphasizes that the various parts of society contribute to ongoing inequality, whereas functionalist theory, as we have seen, stresses that they contribute to the ongoing stability of society. Thus while functionalist theory emphasizes the benefits of the various parts of society for ongoing social stability, conflict theory favors social change to reduce inequality.



Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels were intense critics of capitalism. Their work inspired the later development of conflict theory in sociology. (Wikimedia Commons – public domain.)

Feminist theory has developed in sociology and other disciplines since the 1970s and for our purposes will be considered a specific application of conflict theory. In this case, the conflict concerns gender inequality rather than the class inequality emphasized by Marx and Engels. Although many variations of feminist theory exist, they all emphasize that society is filled with gender inequality such that women are the subordinate sex in many dimensions of social, political, and economic life (Lorber, 2010). Liberal feminists view gender inequality as arising out of gender differences in socialization, while Marxist feminists say that this inequality is a result of the rise of capitalism, which made women dependent on men for economic support. On the other hand, radical feminists view gender inequality as present in all societies, not just capitalist ones. Several chapters in this book emphasize the perspectives of feminist sociologists and other social scientists.

Conflict theory in its various forms views social problems as arising from society's inherent inequality. Depending on which version of conflict theory is being considered, the inequality contributing to social problems is based on social class, race and ethnicity, gender, or some other dimension of society's hierarchy. Because any of these inequalities represents a fundamental flaw in society, conflict theory assumes that fundamental social change is needed to address society's many social problems.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the interaction of individuals and on how they interpret their interaction. Its roots lie in the work of early 1900s American sociologists, social psychologists, and philosophers who were interested in human consciousness and action. Herbert Blumer (1969) (Blumer, 1969), a sociologist at the University of Chicago, built on their writings to develop symbolic interactionism, a term he coined. Drawing on Blumer's work, symbolic interactionists feel that people do not merely learn the roles that society has set out for them; instead they construct these roles as they interact. As they interact, they negotiate their definitions of the situations in which they find themselves and socially construct the reality of these situations. In doing so, they rely heavily on symbols such as words and gestures to reach a shared understanding of their interaction.



Symbolic interactionism focuses on individuals, such as the people conversing here. Sociologists favoring this approach examine how and why individuals interact and interpret the meanings of their interaction. (Wikimedia Commons – public domain.)

An example is the familiar symbol of shaking hands. In the United States and many other societies, shaking hands is a symbol of greeting and friendship. This simple act indicates that you are a nice, polite person with whom someone should feel comfortable. To reinforce this symbol's importance for understanding a bit of interaction, consider a situation where someone *refuses* to shake hands. This action is usually intended as a sign of dislike or as an insult, and the other person interprets it as such. Their understanding of the situation and subsequent interaction will be very different from those arising from the more typical shaking of hands. As the term *symbolic interactionism* implies, their understanding of this encounter arises from what they do when they interact and from their use and interpretation of the various symbols included in their interaction. According to symbolic interactionists, social order is possible because people learn what various symbols (such as shaking hands) mean and apply these meanings to different kinds of situations. If you visited a society where sticking your right hand out to greet someone was interpreted as a threatening gesture, you would quickly learn the value of common understandings of symbols.

Symbolic interactionism views social problems as arising from the interaction of individuals. This interaction matters in two important respects. First, socially problematic behaviors such as crime and drug use are often learned from our interaction with people who engage in these behaviors; we adopt their attitudes that justify committing these behaviors, and we learn any special techniques that might be needed to commit these behaviors. Second, we also learn our perceptions of a social problem from our interaction with other people, whose perceptions and beliefs influence our own perceptions and beliefs.

Because symbolic interactionism emphasizes the perception of social problems, it is closely aligned with the social constructionist view discussed earlier. Both perspectives emphasize the subjective nature of social problems. By doing so, they remind us that perceptions often matter at least as much as objective reality in determining whether a given condition or behavior rises to the level of a social problem and in the types of possible solutions that various parties might favor for a particular social problem.

Applying the Three Perspectives



To explain armed robbery, symbolic interactionists focus on how armed robbers decide when and where to rob a victim and on how their interactions with other criminals reinforce their own criminal tendencies. (Geoffrey Fairchild – The Robbery – CC BY 2.0.)

To help you further understand the different views of these three theoretical perspectives, let's see what they would probably say about *armed robbery*, a very serious form of crime, while recognizing that the three perspectives together provide a more comprehensive understanding of armed robbery than any one perspective provides by itself.

A functionalist approach might suggest that armed robbery actually serves positive functions for society, such as the job-creating function mentioned earlier for crime in general. It would still think that efforts should be made to reduce armed robbery, but it would also assume that far-reaching changes in our society would be neither wise nor necessary as part of the effort to reduce crime.

Conflict theory would take a very different approach to understanding armed robbery. It might note that most street criminals are poor and thus emphasize that armed robbery is the result of the despair and frustration of living in poverty and facing a lack of jobs and other opportunities for economic and social success. The roots of street crime, from the perspective of conflict theory, thus lie in society at least as much as they lie in the individuals committing such crime. To reduce armed robbery and other street crime, conflict theory would advocate far-reaching changes in the economic structure of society.

For its part, symbolic interactionism would focus on how armed robbers make such decisions as when and where to rob someone and on how their interactions with other criminals reinforce their own criminal tendencies. It would also investigate how victims of armed robbery behave when confronted by a robber. To reduce armed robbery, it would advocate programs that reduce the opportunities for interaction among potential criminal offenders, for example, after-school programs that keep at-risk youths busy in "conventional" activities so that they have less time to spend with youths who might help them get into trouble.

Key Takeaways

- According to C. Wright Mills, the sociological imagination involves the ability to recognize that private troubles are rooted in public issues and structural problems.
- Functionalism emphasizes the importance of social institutions for social stability and implies that far-reaching social change will be socially harmful.
- Conflict theory emphasizes social inequality and suggests that far-reaching social change is needed to achieve a just society.
- Symbolic interactionism emphasizes the social meanings and understandings that individuals derive from their social interaction.

For Your Review

1. Select an example of a "private trouble" and explain how and why it may reflect a structural problem in society.
2. At this point in your study of social problems, which one of the three sociological theoretical perspectives sounds most appealing to you? Why?

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1.3.3: Continuity and Change in Social Problems

Learning Objectives

1. Explain what is meant by this book's subtitle, "Continuity and Change."
2. List the three sources of changes to social problems.
3. Describe how the United States compares to other democracies regarding the seriousness of social problems.

This book's subtitle, "Continuity and Change," conveys a theme that will guide every chapter's discussion. Social problems are, first of all, *persistent*. They have continued for decades and even centuries, and they show no sign of ending anytime soon. In view of social problems' long history, certainty of continuing for some time to come, and serious consequences, it is easy to feel overwhelmed when reading about them, to think that little can be done about them, and even to become a bit depressed. As a result, it is easy for students to come away from social problems courses with a rather pessimistic, "doom and gloom" outlook (Johnson, 2005).



An important source of change in social problems is protest by a social change group or movement. (M 2 – Fantasia Protest, Castro Theater, 1991 – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.)

That is why this book stresses the second part of the subtitle, *change*. Although social problems are indeed persistent, it is also true that certain problems are less serious now than in the past. Change is possible. As just one of many examples, consider the conditions that workers face in the United States. As Chapter 12 discusses, many workers today are unemployed, have low wages, or work in substandard and even dangerous workplaces. Yet they are immeasurably better off than a century ago, thanks to the US labor movement that began during the 1870s. Workers now have the eight-hour day, the minimum wage (even if many people think it is too low), the right to strike, and workplaces that are much safer than when the labor movement began. In two more examples, people of color and women have made incredible advances since the 1960s, even if, as Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 discuss, they continue to experience racial and gender inequality, respectively. To repeat: Change is possible.

How does change occur? One source of change in social problems is social science theory and research. Over the decades, theory and research in sociology and the other social sciences have pointed to the reasons for social problems, to potentially successful ways of addressing them, and to actual policies that succeeded in addressing some aspect of a social problem. Accordingly, the discussion in each chapter of this book is based on sound social science theory and research, and each chapter will present examples of how the findings from sociological and other social science research have either contributed to public policy related to the chapter's social problem or have the potential of doing so.

The actions of individuals and groups may also make a difference. Many people have public-service jobs or volunteer in all sorts of activities involving a social problem: they assist at a food pantry, they help clean up a riverbank, and so forth. Others take on a more activist orientation by becoming involved in small social change groups or a larger social movement. Our nation is a better place today because of the labor movement, the Southern civil rights movement, the women's movement, the gay rights movement, the environmental movement, and other efforts too numerous to mention. According to Frances Fox Piven (2006),Piven, F. F. (2006). *Challenging authority: How ordinary people change America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. a former president of

the American Sociological Association, it is through such efforts that “ordinary people change America,” as the subtitle of her book on this subject reads.

Sharing this view, anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Change thus is not easy, but it can and does occur. Eleanor Roosevelt (1960, p. 168)Roosevelt, E. (1960). *You learn by living: Eleven keys for a more fulfilling life*. New York, NY: Harper & Row. recognized this when she wrote, “Surely, in the light of history, it is more intelligent to hope rather than to fear, to try rather than not to try. For one thing we know beyond all doubt: Nothing has ever been achieved by the person who says, ‘It can’t be done.’” In the optimistic spirit of these two famous women, we will see examples throughout this book of people making a difference in their jobs, volunteer activities, and involvement in social change efforts.





Many other democracies rank higher than the United States on poverty, health, and other social indicators. For this reason, the United States may have much to learn from their positive examples.

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Change also occurs in social problems because policymakers (elected or appointed officials and other individuals) pass laws or enact policies that successfully address a social problem. They often do so only because of the pressure of a social movement, but sometimes they have the vision to act without such pressure. It is also true that many officials fail to take action despite the pressure of a social movement, so those who do take action should be applauded. A recent example involves the governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, who made the legalization of same-sex marriage a top priority for his state when he took office in January 2011. After the New York state legislature narrowly approved same-sex marriage six months later, Cuomo's advocacy was widely credited for enabling this to happen (Barbaro, 2011).Barbaro, M. (2011, June 6). Behind NY gay marriage, an unlikely mix of forces. *New York Times*, p. A1.

A final source of change is the lessons learned from other nations' experiences with social problems. Sometimes these lessons for the United States are positive ones, as when another nation has tackled a social problem more successfully than the United States, and sometimes these lessons are negative ones, as when another nation has a more serious problem than the United States and/or has made mistakes in addressing this problem. The United States can learn from the good examples of some other nations, and it can also learn from the bad ones. For this reason, each chapter of this book discusses such examples. In this regard, the United States has much to learn from the experiences of other long-standing democracies like Canada, the nations of Western Europe, and Australia and New Zealand. Despite its great wealth, the United States ranks *below* most of its democratic peers on many social indicators, such as poverty, health, and so on (Holland, 2011; Russell, 2011).Holland, J. (2011, June 15). 9 countries that do it better: Why does Europe take better care of its people than America? *AlterNet*. Retrieved from http://www.alternet.org/story/151312/151319_countries_that_do_it_better%151313A_why_does_europe_take_better_care_of_its_people_than_america?page=151311; Russell, J. W. (2011). *Double standard: Social policy in Europe and the United States* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. A major reason for this difference is that other democratic governments are far more proactive, in terms of attention and spending, than the US federal and state governments in helping their citizens. Because the United States has much to learn from their positive example, this book's chapters all discuss policies that enable other democracies to address certain social problems far more successfully than the United States has addressed them.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Social problems are persistent, but they have also changed over the years, and many social problems are less serious now than in the past.
- Three sources of change to social problems include social science research, the efforts of citizens acting alone or especially in social change groups, and the experiences of other nations.

FOR YOUR REVIEW

1. Have you participated in any volunteer or other activity involving a social problem? If so, why did you do so? If not, why have you not participated in such an effort?
2. Do you share Eleanor Roosevelt's optimism that social change is possible? Why or why not?

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1.3.4: Doing Research on Social Problems

Learning Objectives

1. List the major advantages and disadvantages of surveys, observational studies, and experiments.
2. Explain why scholars who study social problems often rely on existing data.

Sound research is an essential tool for understanding the sources, dynamics, and consequences of social problems and possible solutions to them. This section briefly describes the major ways in which sociologists gather information about social problems. Table 1.2 “Major Sociological Research Methods” summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

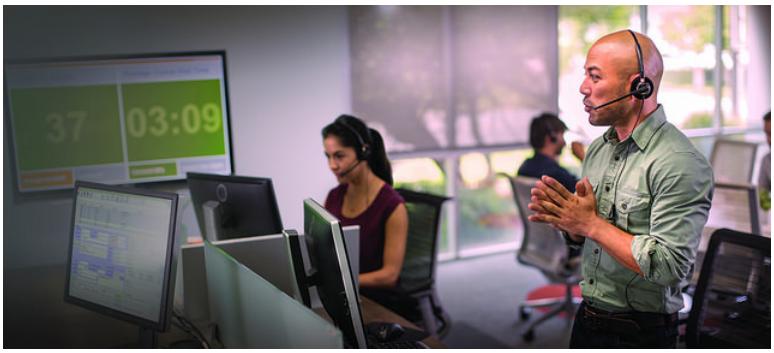
Table 1.2 Major Sociological Research Methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Survey	Many people can be included. If given to a random sample of the population, a survey’s results can be generalized to the population.	Large surveys are expensive and time consuming. Although much information is gathered, this information is relatively superficial.
Experiments	If random assignment is used, experiments provide fairly convincing data on cause and effect.	Because experiments do not involve random samples of the population and most often involve college students, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Observation (field research)	Observational studies may provide rich, detailed information about the people who are observed.	Because observation studies do not involve random samples of the population, their results cannot readily be generalized to the population.
Existing data	Because existing data have already been gathered, the researcher does not have to spend the time and money to gather data.	The data set that is being analyzed may not contain data on all the variables in which a sociologist is interested or may contain data on variables that are not measured in ways the sociologist prefers.

Surveys

The *survey* is the most common method by which sociologists gather their data. The Gallup poll is perhaps the most well-known example of a survey and, like all surveys, gathers its data with the help of a questionnaire that is given to a group of respondents. The Gallup poll is an example of a survey conducted by a private organization, but sociologists do their own surveys, as does the government and many organizations in addition to Gallup. Many surveys are administered to respondents who are randomly chosen and thus constitute a random sample. In a random sample, everyone in the population (whether it be the whole US population or just the population of a state or city, all the college students in a state or city or all the students at just one college, etc.) has the same chance of being included in the survey. The beauty of a random sample is that it allows us to generalize the results of the sample to the population from which the sample comes. This means that we can be fairly sure of the behavior and attitudes of the whole US population by knowing the behavior and attitudes of just four hundred people randomly chosen from that population.

Some surveys are *face-to-face* surveys, in which interviewers meet with respondents to ask them questions. This type of survey can yield much information, because interviewers typically will spend at least an hour asking their questions, and a high response rate (the percentage of all people in the sample who agree to be interviewed), which is important to be able to generalize the survey’s results to the entire population. On the downside, this type of survey can be very expensive and time consuming to conduct.



Surveys are very useful for gathering various kinds of information relevant to social problems. Advances in technology have made telephone surveys involving random-digit dialing perhaps the most popular way of conducting a survey. (plantronicsgermany – Encore520 call center man standing – CC BY-ND 2.0.)

Because of these drawbacks, sociologists and other researchers have turned to telephone surveys. Most Gallup polls are conducted over the telephone. Computers do random-digit dialing, which results in a random sample of all telephone numbers being selected. Although the response rate and the number of questions asked are both lower than in face-to-face surveys (people can just hang up the phone at the outset or let their answering machine take the call), the ease and low expense of telephone surveys are making them increasingly popular. Surveys done over the Internet are also becoming more popular, as they can reach many people at very low expense. A major problem with web surveys is that their results cannot necessarily be generalized to the entire population because not everyone has access to the Internet.

Surveys are used in the study of social problems to gather information about the behavior and attitudes of people regarding one or more problems. For example, many surveys ask people about their use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs or about their experiences of being unemployed or in poor health. Many of the chapters in this book will present evidence gathered by surveys carried out by sociologists and other social scientists, various governmental agencies, and private research and public interest firms.

Experiments

Experiments are the primary form of research in the natural and physical sciences, but in the social sciences they are for the most part found only in psychology. Some sociologists still use experiments, however, and they remain a powerful tool of social research.

The major advantage of experiments, whether they are done in the natural and physical sciences or in the social sciences, is that the researcher can be fairly sure of a cause-and-effect relationship because of the way the experiment is set up. Although many different experimental designs exist, the typical experiment consists of an experimental group and a control group, with subjects *randomly assigned* to either group. The researcher does something to the experimental group that is not done to the control group. If the two groups differ later in some variable, then it is safe to say that the condition to which the experimental group was subjected was responsible for the difference that resulted.

Most experiments take place in the laboratory, which for psychologists may be a room with a one-way mirror, but some experiments occur in the field, or in a natural setting (*field experiments*). In Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the early 1980s, sociologists were involved in a much-discussed field experiment sponsored by the federal government. The researchers wanted to see whether arresting men for domestic violence made it less likely that they would commit such violence again. To test this hypothesis, the researchers had police do one of the following after arriving at the scene of a domestic dispute: They either arrested the suspect, separated him from his wife or partner for several hours, or warned him to stop but did not arrest or separate him. The researchers then determined the percentage of men in each group who committed repeated domestic violence during the next six months and found that those who were arrested had the lowest rate of recidivism, or repeat offending (Sherman & Berk, 1984). This finding led many jurisdictions across the United States to adopt a policy of mandatory arrest for domestic violence suspects. However, replications of the Minneapolis experiment in other cities found that arrest sometimes reduced recidivism for domestic violence but also sometimes increased it, depending on which city was being studied and on certain characteristics of the suspects, including whether they were employed at the time of their arrest (Sherman, 1992).

As the Minneapolis study suggests, perhaps the most important problem with experiments is that their results are not *generalizable* beyond the specific subjects studied. The subjects in most psychology experiments, for example, are college students, who obviously are not typical of average Americans: They are younger, more educated, and more likely to be middle class. Despite this problem, experiments in psychology and other social sciences have given us very valuable insights into the sources of attitudes and

behavior. Scholars of social problems are increasingly using field experiments to study the effectiveness of various policies and programs aimed at addressing social problems. We will examine the results of several such experiments in the chapters ahead.

Observational Studies

Observational research, also called *field research*, is a staple of sociology. Sociologists have long gone into the field to observe people and social settings, and the result has been many rich descriptions and analyses of behavior in juvenile gangs, bars, urban street corners, and even whole communities.

Observational studies consist of both participant observation and nonparticipant observation. Their names describe how they differ. In participant observation, the researcher is part of the group that she or he is studying, spends time with the group, and might even live with people in the group. Several classical social problems studies of this type exist, many of them involving people in urban neighborhoods (Liebow, 1967; Liebow, 1993; Whyte, 1943). In nonparticipant observation, the researcher observes a group of people but does not otherwise interact with them. If you went to your local shopping mall to observe, say, whether people walking with children looked happier than people without children, you would be engaging in nonparticipant observation.

Similar to experiments, observational studies cannot automatically be generalized to other settings or members of the population. But in many ways they provide a richer account of people's lives than surveys do, and they remain an important method of research on social problems.

Existing Data

Sometimes sociologists do not gather their own data but instead analyze *existing data* that someone else has gathered. The US Census Bureau, for example, gathers data on all kinds of areas relevant to the lives of Americans, and many sociologists analyze census data on such social problems as poverty, unemployment, and illness. Sociologists interested in crime and the criminal justice system may analyze data from court records, while medical sociologists often analyze data from patient records at hospitals. Analysis of existing data such as these is called secondary data analysis. Its advantage to sociologists is that someone else has already spent the time and money to gather the data. A disadvantage is that the data set being analyzed may not contain data on all the topics in which a sociologist may be interested or may contain data on topics that are not measured in ways the sociologist might prefer.

The Scientific Method and Objectivity

This section began by stressing the need for sound research in the study of social problems. But what are the elements of sound research? At a minimum, such research should follow the rules of the *scientific method*. As you probably learned in high school and/or college science classes, these rules—formulating hypotheses, gathering and testing data, drawing conclusions, and so forth—help guarantee that research yields the most accurate and reliable conclusions possible.

An overriding principle of the scientific method is that research should be conducted as *objectively* as possible. Researchers are often passionate about their work, but they must take care not to let the findings they expect and even hope to uncover affect how they do their research. This in turn means that they must not conduct their research in a manner that helps achieve the results they expect to find. Such bias can happen unconsciously, and the scientific method helps reduce the potential for this bias as much as possible.

This potential is arguably greater in the social sciences than in the natural and physical sciences. The political views of chemists and physicists typically do not affect how an experiment is performed and how the outcome of the experiment is interpreted. In contrast, researchers in the social sciences, and perhaps particularly in sociology, often have strong feelings about the topics they are studying. Their social and political beliefs may thus influence how they perform their research on these topics and how they interpret the results of this research. Following the scientific method helps reduce this possible influence.

Key Takeaways

- The major types of research on social problems include surveys, experiments, observational studies, and the use of existing data.
- Surveys are the most common method, and the results of surveys of random samples may be generalized to the populations from which the samples come.
- Observation studies and existing data are also common methods in social problems research. Observation studies enable the gathering of rich, detailed information, but their results cannot necessarily be generalized beyond the people studied.
- Research on social problems should follow the scientific method to yield the most accurate and objective conclusions possible.

For Your Review

1. Have you ever been a respondent or subject in any type of sociological or psychological research project? If so, how did it feel to be studied?
2. Which type of social problems research method sounds most interesting to you? Why?

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1.3.5: End-of-Chapter Material

Summary

1. Some sociologists favor the social constructionist view that negative social conditions or behaviors are not social problems unless they are generally perceived as a social problem, but other sociologists say that these conditions and behaviors are still social problems even if they are not perceived as such.
2. According to C. Wright Mills, the sociological imagination involves the ability to realize that personal troubles are rooted in problems in the larger social structure. The sociological imagination thus supports a blaming-the-system view over a blaming-the-victim view.
3. Social problems have existed for decades or even centuries, but many of these have also lessened in their seriousness over time, and change in the future is indeed possible.
4. Several theoretical perspectives in sociology exist. Functionalism emphasizes the functions that social institutions serve to ensure the ongoing stability of society, while conflict theory focuses on the conflict among different racial, ethnic, social class, and other groups and emphasizes how social institutions help ensure inequality. Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals interpret the meanings of the situations in which they find themselves.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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SECTION OVERVIEW

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2.1.1: Drug Use in History

Learning Objectives

1. Discuss the presence of drugs in ancient times.
2. Summarize the use of drugs in the United States during the nineteenth century.
3. Explain the racial basis for decisions to ban opium, cocaine, and marijuana in the United States.

Shakespeare once wrote that "what's past is prologue." This familiar phrase means that what happened in the past provides a context for, and can help to understand and predict, the future. To the extent that the past is prologue, the history of drug use provides a sobering lesson: Drug use has been common since ancient times and has been common in almost every society. As a recent book on drug policy states, "People have used chemicals to alter their state of mind since before there were written records" (Kleiman, Caulkins, & Hawken, 2011, p. xviii). If past is indeed prologue, then it is no surprise that drug use remains common in contemporary nations despite considerable efforts to reduce it.

One manifestation of the long history of drug use is that humans have used mind-altering plants since prehistoric times. "Early humans discovered that eating some plants gave a feeling of relaxation, happiness, drowsiness, or peace," one scholar writes. "Some gave a feeling of increased energy, alertness, and stamina. And some caused strange sensations, terrifying visions, or a profoundly different awareness" (Gahlinger, 2004, p. 5).



Ancient Greeks drank poppy juice, which contained opium, around 300 BCE. Use of other drugs was also common in ancient times. (Tilemahos Efthimiadis – National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece – CC BY 2.0.)

Examples of drug use thousands of years ago abound (Escohotado, 2010; Faupel, Horowitz, & Weaver, 2010; Goodman, Sherratt, & Lovejoy, 2007).Escohotado, A. (2010). *The general history of drugs* (G. W. Robinette, Trans.). Valparasio, Chile: Graffiti Milante Press; Faupel, C. E., Horowitz, A. M., & Weaver., G. S. (2010). *The sociology of American drug use*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; Goodman, J., Sherratt, A., & Lovejoy, P. E. (Eds.). (2007). *Consuming habits: Drugs in history and anthropology* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge. Mead, an alcoholic drink made from fermented honey, was first used about 8000 BCE, and beer and berry wines were first used about 6000 BCE. The ancient Sumerians used opium starting about 5000 BCE. Ancient Egypt used alcohol in 3500 BCE, while ancient China used cannabis (the source of marijuana) around 3000 BCE. Ancient people in what is now Switzerland ate poppy seeds (the source of opium) in 2500 BCE. Coca leaves (the source of cocaine) have been chewed for thousands of years. Folk medicines made from plants and herbs have also been used since ancient times. People in ancient Palestine drank wine in 350 BCE. Ancient Greeks drank poppy juice in 300 BCE. In about the same period, South American tribes used a hallucinogen called *cohoba*, made from mimosa beans. The Chinese and other Asians were using opium regularly by 1000 CE. Native Americans used tobacco before being discovered by Columbus in 1492. The use of various drugs has also been common in the many societies that anthropologists have studied (Durant & Thakker, 2003; Page & Singer, 2010).Durant, R., & Thakker, J. (2003). *Substance use and abuse: Cultural and historical perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications; Page, B., & Singer, M. (2010). *Comprehending drug use: Ethnographic Research at the social margins*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Sociologist Erich Goode (2008, p. 176)Goode, E. (2008). *Deviant behavior* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. summarizes the history of drug use as follows: "Humans have been ingesting drugs for thousands of years. And throughout

recorded time, significant numbers of nearly every society on earth have used one or more drugs to achieve certain desired physical or mental states. Drug use comes close to being a universal, both worldwide and throughout history."

Drug Use in US History

This history of drug use includes the United States, where past is again prologue. During the colonial era, tobacco was a major crop in Virginia and other colonies thanks to slave labor. After being processed, it was commonly used by colonists and also exported to Europe in great quantities (Gately, 2001).Gately, I. (2001). *Tobacco: The story of how tobacco seduced the world*. New York, NY: Grove Press. From the earliest colonial days, alcohol was another drug used in great quantities, as "Americans were drinkers right from the start" (Genzlinger, 2011, p. C1).Genzlinger, N. (2011, October 1). Bellying up to the time when America went dry. *New York Times*, p. C1. The Mayflower, the celebrated ship that brought the first Puritans to what eventually became the United States, was filled with barrels of beer. In colonial New England, rum manufacturing was a major industry, and rum drinking was common. During the early 1770s, New England had more than 140 rum distilleries, and rum consumption in the colonies averaged 7.5 million gallons annually. This massive drinking has led one author to call rum "the real spirit of 1776" (Williams, 2006).Williams, I. (2006). *Rum: a social and sociable history of the real spirit of 1776*. New York, NY: Nation Books. Rum was also a major export to Europe and elsewhere. In addition to rum, colonists routinely drank beer and hard cider.

During the nineteenth century, Americans began to use drugs other than alcohol in great quantities. One popular drug was coffee. Before the Civil War, Americans who drank coffee had to buy green (unroasted) coffee beans in bulk and roast their own coffee. Then in 1865, John Arbuckle, a Pittsburgh grocer, began selling roasted coffee inside a new invention—the paper bag. His bagged coffee was an instant hit across the nation, other coffee manufacturers followed suit, and coffee use by Americans greatly increased.

Alcohol also remained a very popular drug, and use of this drug during the 1800s was probably greater than during colonial America. Two reasons help account for this trend (Faupel et al., 2010).Faupel, C. E., Horowitz, A. M., & Weaver., G. S. (2010). *The sociology of American drug use*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. One reason was the western frontier. As the nation moved west, many of the explorers and settlers who led the way were men who were unmarried or, if married, men who had left their families behind. To put it mildly, they drank a lot, fought a lot, and gambled a lot. A second reason was that many Irish immigrants came to the United States during a great wave of immigration that began in the mid-nineteenth century. Although it might sound like a stereotype, the Irish drank a lot of alcohol back in their homeland, and they continued to do so once they reached the United States. Regardless of who was drinking, heavy alcohol use contributed greatly to poverty, to physical assaults and homicides, and to domestic violence and other family problems.

Three other popular drugs in this era were opium, cocaine, and marijuana. Use of these drugs was so common that nineteenth-century America has been called a "dope fiend's paradise" (Brecher, 1973).Brecher, E. M. (1973). *Licit and illicit drugs*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown. A brief discussion of these drugs' histories will underscore the widespread use of drugs in the American past and also racial issues that arose when laws were passed to ban these drugs (Musto, 1999).Musto, D. F. (1999). *The American disease: Origins of narcotic control* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Opium

During the decades before and after the Civil War, the use of opium was extremely common (Goode, 2012).Goode, E. (2012). *Drugs in American society* (8th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. Beyond making people feel good, opium is an effective painkiller and cough suppressant. Accordingly, it was a staple in many patent medicines, elixirs and tonics, sold back then in apothecaries, general stores, and other venues. Large numbers of people from all social backgrounds used these opium-laced medicines for problems such as depression, headaches, menstrual cramps, and toothaches. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that the United States was a nation of opium users during this period; an estimated 500,000 Americans were addicted to opium by the end of the century. As anthropologist Robert B. Edgerton (1976, pp. 57–58)Edgerton, R. (1976). *Deviance: A cross-cultural perspective*. Menlo Park, CA: Cummings. summarizes the situation, "The use of opium was widespread in all segments of American society. Children were calmed with opium derivatives, women used many popular patent medicines which were liberally larded with opiates, and 'opium dens' were probably present in all cities and most towns as well."



Opium was a common ingredient in nineteenth-century tonics and elixirs that were sold widely to the public.

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Attendance at opium dens (the equivalent of today's bar or tavern, with opium the drug of choice rather than alcohol) was a popular activity for the Chinese immigrants who began coming to the United States during the 1850s to help build the nation's railroads and

perform other jobs. White workers feared their growing numbers as a threat to their jobs, and racial prejudice against the Chinese increased. Politicians, labor unions, and other parties began to focus on the Chinese habit of smoking opium at opium dens and warned that the Chinese were kidnapping little white children, taking them to the opium dens, and turning them into "opium fiends." This campaign had two effects: it increased prejudice against the Chinese, and it increased public concern about opium. This rising concern led San Francisco in 1875 to become the first locality to ban opium dens. Other California cities did the same, and the state itself banned opium dens in 1881. Three decades later, the federal government banned the manufacture, sale, and use of opium (except for use with a physician's prescription) when it passed the Harrison Narcotics Act in 1914.

Cocaine

Cocaine was another drug that was very popular in the nineteenth century, beginning in the 1880s, thanks in part to enthusiastic claims by Sigmund Freud and American physicians that cocaine could help relieve asthma, depression, hay fever, sexual impotence, toothache pain, and a host of other problems. Like opium, cocaine was a popular ingredient in the many patent medicines that people bought at various stores, and the US Army Surgeon-General advocated its medical use. It was a major ingredient in a new beverage introduced in 1886, Coca-Cola, which became an instant hit because people naturally felt so good when they drank Coke! During the next two decades, however, concern grew about cocaine's effects. Some of this concern was fueled by the absurd belief that African Americans who used cocaine became extra strong, dangerous, and even invulnerable to bullets. Cocaine was heavily taxed by the 1914 Harrison Narcotics Act and later banned.

Marijuana

A third legal drug during the late nineteenth century was marijuana. It joined opium and cocaine in being a common ingredient in patent medicines, and it was a popular drug for problems like migraine headaches, menstrual cramps, and toothache pain. After the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Mexicans moved to the United States in increased numbers and brought with them their habit of marijuana use. Whites feared that Mexicans would take their jobs, and, similar to what happened with opium and Chinese immigrants during the 1870s, began to charge that Mexicans who used marijuana would become violent and more likely to rape and murder innocent white victims. This racially prejudiced claim increased concern about marijuana and helped lead to the federal Marijuana Tax Act of 1937 that banned its use.

This brief history shows that drug use has been part of the American culture ever since the nation began. If past is prologue, it should come as no surprise that drugs remain part of the American culture today, and it should also come as no surprise that efforts to reduce or eliminate drug use often meet with much resistance and little success. As the United States continues to try to deal with drug use, these basic facts must not be forgotten.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Drug use has been common since ancient times.
- Alcohol was widely drunk in colonial America. During the latter nineteenth century, opium, marijuana, and cocaine were legal drugs that were also widely used.
- Racial prejudice played an important role in decisions during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to ban opium, marijuana, and cocaine.

FOR YOUR REVIEW

1. Were you surprised to read that mind-altering drug use has been common since ancient times? Why or why not?
2. Were you surprised to read that racial prejudice helped lead to bans on opium, marijuana, and cocaine? Why or why not?

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2.1.2: Drugs and Drug Use Today

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the different types of drugs.
2. Explain the various harms caused by alcohol and tobacco.
3. Understand the effects of marijuana, cocaine, and other illegal drugs.

A drug may be defined as any substance other than food that, when taken into the body, affects the structure and/or functioning of the body. Defined this way, many common substances contain drugs or are drugs: coffee, No-Doz, and other products to keep us alert; aspirin, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and other pain relievers; Tums, Rolaids, and other products that reduce heartburn; Metamucil and other products that reduce constipation; Robitussin, Sudafed, and other cold medicines; and so forth. If you have ever used one of these products, you are technically a drug user, however silly that might sound.

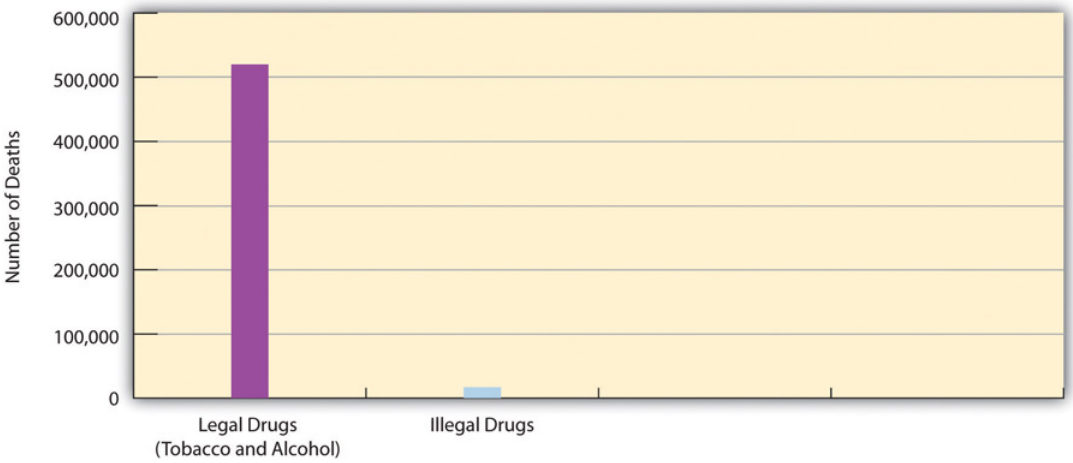
Many prescription drugs also certainly exist: Prozac and other antidepressants; Valium and other tranquilizers; Lipitor and other cholesterol drugs; Yasmin, Yaz and other birth control pills; Viagra and other products that relieve erectile dysfunction; and so forth. Sales of these prescription drugs amount to tens of billions of dollars annually.

The following substances are also drugs: alcohol, ecstasy, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, LSD, methamphetamine, PCP, and tobacco. Much has been written about these drugs, and we will discuss them further later in this section. But note that two of these drugs, alcohol and tobacco, are legal after a certain age, while the remaining drugs are illegal.

One of the problems in deciding how to think about and deal with drugs is that this distinction between legal drugs and illegal drugs has no logical basis. It makes sense to assume that the illegal drugs should be the ones that are the most dangerous and cause the most physical and social harm, but that is not true. Rather, alcohol and tobacco cause the most harm even though they are legal. As Kleiman et al. (2011, p. xviii) note about alcohol, “When we read that one in twelve adults suffers from a substance abuse disorder or that 8 million children are living with an addicted parent, it is important to remember that alcohol abuse drives those numbers to a much greater extent than does dependence on illegal drugs.” Tobacco kills about 435,000 Americans annually by causing premature death, and alcohol kills about 85,000 annually through its effects on the liver and other body organs (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004).

Putting these numbers together, some 520,000 Americans die annually from alcohol and tobacco use. Meanwhile, the physiological effects of all illegal drugs combined kill an estimated 17,000 Americans annually (Mokdad et al., 2004), a number that is only just above the number of annual deaths (16,500) from nonsteroidal inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin and ibuprofen (Frech & Go, 2009). Figure 7.1 “Annual Deaths from Legal and Illegal Drugs” depicts the huge difference between deaths from alcohol and tobacco as legal drugs and from illegal drugs.

Figure 7.1 Annual Deaths from Legal and Illegal Drugs



Source: Mokdad, A. H., Marks, J. S., Stroup, D. F., & Gerberding, J. L. (2004). Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 291*(10), 1238–1245.

We return to the issue of the relative harm of legal and illegal drugs toward the end of the chapter when we discuss drug policy. In the meantime, keep in mind two related facts: (1) all drugs can be dangerous, and (2) some drugs are much more dangerous than others. Two aspirins are safe to take, but a bottle of aspirin can kill someone. Two cups of coffee a day are fine, but drinking many cups a day can cause anxiety, insomnia, and headaches. One drink of alcohol is safe to take, but several drinks in a short time amount to binge drinking, and long-term use of alcohol can kill someone. One snort of cocaine is usually safe, but even one snort can result in a sudden fatal heart attack, and long-term use often has serious health consequences.

Types of Drugs

Drugs are commonly classified into certain categories according to their physiological effects. All drugs may make us feel good, but they do so in different ways. Because some drugs are much more potent than other drugs, there is much variation within each category. Partly because many drugs have multiple effects, many different classifications of drugs exist. A common classification includes the following categories: depressants, hallucinogens, marijuana, narcotics, and stimulants.

Depressants

Depressants slow down the activity of the central nervous system. Depending on the specific drug, they help induce drowsiness and relaxation, and they can reduce anxiety and pain. Several types of depressants exist. *Analgesics* reduce pain and include over-the-counter products such as aspirin, acetaminophen (the major ingredient in Tylenol), and ibuprofen (the major ingredient in Advil and Motrin), and many prescription medicines that contain acetaminophen. *Sedatives* help people relax and include alcohol, barbiturates, and sleep medicines such as Sominex and Tylenol PM (both over-the-counter) and Ambien and Valium (both prescription). Large doses of depressants may lead to physical dependence and sometimes death.

Hallucinogens

Hallucinogens are mind-altering drugs that cause delusions or hallucinations. Their ranks include ecstasy, LSD, mescaline, and PCP. Many people who use a hallucinogen report that the mind-altering effects of the drug provide them a truly wonderful experience, but many also find the effects to be troubling at best and horrible and terrifying at worst. Long-term effects include hallucinations that occur without any drug use preceding them.

Marijuana



Marijuana is by far the most popular illegal drug in the United States.

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Because marijuana's effects do not fit neatly into any other category of drug, marijuana (along with its close cousin, hashish) is often considered to be its own category. As we will see later, it is by far the most popular illegal drug in the United States. Its effects include distortion of time and space, euphoria, hunger, increased sensory perception, and relaxation.

Narcotics

Narcotics are sometimes classified under depressants because they slow down the central nervous system, but they are often still considered as their own category. They are highly effective at relieving pain and are a common substance in prescription medicines for severe pain. By definition, all narcotics are derived from opium, either in its natural form or in a synthesized form. Examples of narcotics include codeine, heroin, methadone, and morphine. In addition to relieving pain, narcotics may induce drowsiness, euphoria, and relaxation. Although narcotics do not damage bodily organs, they are very physically addictive, and high doses can be fatal.

Stimulants

Stimulants have the opposite effect of depressants by speeding up the central nervous system. They increase alertness and energy and can produce euphoria or anxiety. Some are legal and some are illegal, and many very different drugs are all considered stimulants: caffeine, cocaine, methamphetamine and other amphetamines, nicotine (tobacco), and Ritalin. Stimulants can be very

physically addictive, and nicotine is thought to be more addictive than heroin. While caffeine is very safe as long as someone does not have too many cups of coffee daily, many other stimulants may have dangerous short-term or long-term side effects on the cardiovascular system.

Not all drugs can be discussed in one chapter. In choosing which drugs to discuss in a book on social problems, it makes sense to discuss the drugs that probably concern Americans the most. We thus focus in the remainder of this section mostly on alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, and heroin.

Legal Drugs

As noted earlier, alcohol and tobacco (nicotine) are two legal drugs that are very common and that together kill hundreds of thousands of Americans annually. According to national survey evidence collected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the federal government, most people 12 and older (as well as many younger than 18) have tried alcohol, and over half the public drinks currently (defined as having had at least one drink in the past month). While many people have tried tobacco, only slightly more than one-fourth of the public uses it currently (at least once during the past month). Table 7.1 summarizes the prevalence of alcohol and nicotine use. Translating some of these percentages into actual numbers, almost 70 million Americans are current tobacco users (mostly by smoking cigarettes), and 131 million are current alcohol users.

Table 7.1 Prevalence of Alcohol and Tobacco Use, Ages 12 and Older, 2010*

	Lifetime	Past year	Past month
Alcohol	82.5	66.4	51.8
Tobacco	68.7	32.8	27.4
* Percentage using in designated time period			

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). *Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings*. Rockville, MD: Author.

With this backdrop, we now discuss these two legal but very harmful drugs in greater detail.

Alcohol

Moderate alcohol use (more than one drink per day for an adult female and two drinks per day for an adult male) is relatively safe for most people and may even have health benefits (Harvard School of Public Health, 2012).Harvard School of Public Health. (2012). Alcohol: Balancing risks and benefits. Retrieved March 30, 2012, from http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/alcohol-full-story/index.html. The problem is that many people drink much more than moderately. As the Harvard School of Public Health (2012)Harvard School of Public Health. (2012). Alcohol: Balancing risks and benefits. Retrieved March 30, 2012, from http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/alcohol-full-story/index.html. explains, “If all drinkers limited themselves to a single drink a day, we probably wouldn’t need as many cardiologists, liver specialists, mental health professionals, and substance abuse counselors. But not everyone who likes to drink alcohol stops at just one. While most people drink in moderation, some don’t.”

SAMHSA survey data show the extent of such problem drinking, as its survey measures both **binge drinking** (five or more drinks on the same occasion—within two hours of each other—on at least one day in the past month) and **heavy drinking** (binge drinking on at least five days in the past month). Table 7.2 presents the relevant data for people 12 and older and also for those aged 18–20, the customary age for people in their first two years of college.

Table 7.2 Prevalence of Binge and Heavy Alcohol Use, 2010*

	Ages 12 and older	Ages 18–20
Binge use	23.1	33.3
Heavy use	6.7	11.3
* Percentage engaging in alcohol use		

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). *Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings*. Rockville, MD: Author.

As Table 7.2 indicates, almost one-fourth of all people 12 and older and one-third of those aged 18–20 engage in binge drinking, while almost 7 percent and about 11 percent, respectively, engage in heavy drinking. The figures for those 12 and older translate to almost 59 million binge drinkers and 17 million heavy drinkers. These numbers show that tens of millions of people abuse alcohol annually and underscore the problem of dealing with problem drinking.

The amount of alcohol consumed annually by occasional, moderate, and heavy drinkers is staggering. The relevant data appear in Table 7.3. Americans drink 7.6 billion gallons of alcohol annually, equivalent to 126 billion standard drinks. This number of drinks works out to 496 drinks per person annually for the 12 and older population and 748 drinks per person for the 12 and older population that drinks at all. Keep in mind that this is just an average. The heavy drinkers identified in Table 7.2 have many more than 748 drinks every year, while light drinkers have only a relative handful of drinks.

Table 7.3 Alcohol Consumption in the United States, 2010

	Number of gallons	Equivalent number of standard drinks*
Beer	6.4 billion	68.2 billion
Wine	713.2 million	18.3 billion
Spirits	463.1 million	39.5 billion
Total	7.6 billion	126.0 billion
* one drink = 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of spirits		

Source: Beer Institute. (2011). *Brewers almanac, 2011*. Washington, DC: Author.

The Drinking Culture and the Alcohol Industry

As noted earlier, alcohol has a long history in the United States and an even longer history in much of the rest of the world. When we think about the tens of millions of Americans who drink at least occasionally, the ads for beer and wine and hard liquor that appear regularly in the popular media, and the thousands of bars and related venues across the country, it is certainly no exaggeration to say that we have a drinking culture.

Once upon a time, the federal and state governments tried to eliminate this culture. We are speaking, of course, about Prohibition. The passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the US Constitution in January 1919 banned the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol; the ban took effect a year later. For reasons we will discuss later, the ban was eventually deemed a failure, and the passage of the Twenty-First Amendment in 1933 repealed the Eighteenth Amendment. The manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcohol became legal once again.

Alcohol manufacturing and sales are a major industry worldwide today. Several alcohol companies rank among the largest corporations in the world as well as in the United States (Jernigan, 2009).Jernigan, D. H. (2009). The global alcohol industry: An overview [Supplmental material]. *Addiction, 104*, 6–12. US alcohol sales amount to about $160 billion annually, and they rose by 20 percent in the 2010–2011 period during the faltering economy (Smith, 2011).Smith, A. (2011, June 9). Alcohol Sales Thrive in Hard Times. *CNN*. Retrieved from http://money.cnn.com. The amount of money the public spends on alcohol equals 12.5 percent of what it spends on food (US Department of Agriculture, 2011).US Department of Agriculture. (2011). Food CPI and expenditures: Table 1. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/CPIFoodAndExpenditures/Data/Expenditures_tables/table1.htm. The alcohol industry provides about 2 million jobs annually, more than $40 billion in wages, and more than $50 billion in taxes, and it contributes more than $160 billion to the annual national economy (Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, 2011).Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. (2011). Economic contribution of alcohol beverage industry. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from http://www.discus.org/pdf/ATT2_Economic_Contribution.pdf. All these figures show that the alcohol industry plays a significant role in the US economy.

Despite this role, if the United States does indeed have a drinking culture, the alcohol industry bears a major share of the responsibility. As the American Medical Association (2004)American Medical Association. (2004). *Alcohol industry 101: Its structure & organization*. Chicago, IL: Author. has stated,

Like the tobacco industry, the alcohol industry produces a legal, widely consumed drug; is dominated by relatively few producers; and utilizes a powerful combination of advertising dollars, savvy marketing, political campaign contributions, and sophisticated lobbying tactics to create and maintain an environment favorable to its economic and political interests. It requires the recruitment of new, youthful drinkers to maintain and build its customer base…As a chemical that affects our bodies, alcohol is a powerful drug resulting in more premature deaths and illnesses than all illicit drugs combined. Yet the industry has shaped public opinion and forced government to treat it not as a drug but as a cultural artifact, a valued legal commodity, almost a food, even a necessity of life.

As just one example of how the alcohol industry promotes its "powerful drug," the headline of a recent news article declared that the "alcohol companies go online to lure young drinkers" (Gardner, 2010).Gardner, A. (2010, May 3). Report: Alcohol Companies go online to lure young drinkers. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/index. According to the report, alcohol companies are increasingly using Facebook and other social media to persuade young people to buy and drink their products. Not surprisingly, many of these young targets turn out to be under the legal drinking age of 21 because they are easily able to gain access to alcohol sites. This problem led a public health professor to observe, "Close to 5,000 people under the age of 21 die of alcohol overuse each year. Virtual worlds show all of the appeal and none of the consequences of alcohol use and undercut efforts to reduce the incidence of underage drinking. At this point, alcohol companies appear limited only by their imaginations and pocketbooks" (Gardner, 2010).Gardner, A. (2010, May 3). Report: Alcohol companies go online to lure young drinkers. *USA Today*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2010-05-23-alcohol-teens_N.htm.



The alcohol industry is a major part of the US and worldwide economies and provides about 2 million jobs annually in the United States.

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Consequences of Alcohol Abuse

Despite alcohol's immense popularity, the fact remains that more than 18 million Americans abuse it (Harvard School of Public Health, 2012).Harvard School of Public Health. (2012). Alcohol: Balancing risks and benefits. Retrieved March 31, 2012, from

http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/alcohol-full-story/index.html. This heavy rate of abuse means that alcohol has serious personal and social consequences. One set of consequences involves personal health. We noted earlier that alcohol abuse is responsible for about 85,000 deaths annually through the physiological damage it does. Heavy alcohol use can destroy the liver, increase blood pressure, weaken the heart and immune system, and cause sexual dysfunction. It can lead to neurological problems and also raises the risk of incurring several kinds of cancer. Binge drinking can cause serious immediate health problems because it may lead to someone overdosing on alcohol. About 800,000 adults are hospitalized every year for alcohol overdoses, and tens of thousands more are hospitalized because they have consumed alcohol along with prescription narcotic pain medications, a combination that can be deadly (National Institutes of Health, 2011).National Institutes of Health. (2011). NIH study finds hospitalizations increase for alcohol and drug overdoses. Retrieved September 21, 2011, from http://www.nih.gov/news/health/sep2011/niaaa-20.htm.

In addition to these health problems, alcohol use is responsible for more than 16,000 traffic fatalities annually, and it plays an important role in violent crime (Felson, Teasdale, & Burchfield, 2008).Felson, R. B., Teasdale, B., & Burchfield, K. B. (2008). The influence of being under the influence. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency, 45*(2), 119–141. As almost anyone with an alcoholic family member can attest, alcohol abuse can also cause many problems for families, including domestic violence and divorce and the stress that results from having to deal with someone's alcoholism on a daily basis. (The Note 7.13 "Children and Our Future" box discusses the impact of parental alcoholism on children.) Alcohol abuse costs the United States more than $185 billion each year in medical expenses, lost earnings because of alcohol-related illness or premature death, lost earnings by victims of violent crime, and alcohol-caused traffic accidents (Harvard School of Public Health, 2012).Harvard School of Public Health. (2012). Alcohol: Balancing risks and benefits. Retrieved March 31, 2012, from http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/alcohol-full-story/index.html.

Children and Our Future

Children of Alcoholics

As with so many social problems, one of the saddest consequences of alcohol abuse involves children. About one-fifth of children have lived with an alcoholic parent or other adult. Whether because alcoholism is partly inherited or because children tend to use their parents as role models, children of alcoholics are four times more likely than children of nonalcoholics to become alcoholics themselves by the time they reach adulthood.

Because living with an alcoholic parent is often both chaotic and unpredictable, it is no surprise that children of alcoholics often experience a great deal of stress and other difficulties that may also account for their greater tendency to become alcoholics. Compared to other children, they are more likely to be neglected and/or abused by their parents, and they are also more likely to miss school, have lower grades, and engage in disruptive behavior. In addition, they are at great risk for eating disorders and substance abuse other than alcohol abuse. The stress they experience can also harm their neurological development and immune system and put them at greater risk for different kinds of illness and disease. Children of alcoholics are also at greater risk for several kinds of psychological and emotional problems. These include (1) *guilt*, because they may blame themselves for their parent's drinking; (2) *anxiety*, because they worry about their parent's health and may see their parents arguing and fighting; (3) *embarrassment* that leads them not to invite friends over to visit nor to ask another adult for help; (4) *lack of trust* in other people, because they have learned not to trust their alcoholic parent; and (5) *anger*, *confusion*, and *depression*.

One special problem that children of alcoholics face is that they are "forced into adulthood." They often find themselves having to care for younger siblings and even for their alcoholic parent. By taking on such a heavy responsibility, they in effect become adults at too tender an age. This responsibility weighs on them and helps account for the psychological and emotional difficulties they often experience.

Mental health professionals strongly advise that children of alcoholics receive counseling and other kinds of support to help them deal with their family experiences. Group support programs for teenaged children may be very helpful. Perhaps the best known such program is Alateen, which also services teenagers who want help dealing with an alcoholic friend. Teenagers at Alateen meetings share their experiences, learn how to deal with the special difficulties that stem from having a relative or friend with an alcohol problem, and provide emotional support for each other. One important message they learn from Alateen is that they are in no way responsible for the alcoholism of their parent, other relative, or friend.

Alateen has helped many young people, as this testimonial from "Lizzy" attests: "Alateen has helped me a lot over the years… From the day I went to my first meeting, the door to my happiness was flung open. With the help of the Alateen Group Sponsors

and my fellow teens, my life has become what I always wanted it to be. My goal for success in the program was fulfilled. I have been given a second chance at life and I have Alateen to thank for that."

Young children and teenagers are resilient, but children of alcoholics have to be especially resilient. Programs like Alateen help give them a second chance.

Sources: Alateen, 2011; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2006; James, 2008Alateen. (2011). Am I a peacemaker or a creator of chaos. *Alateen Talk*. Retrieved from http[0]://www.al-anon.org/alateen-talk; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (2006). Children of alcoholics. Retrieved October 4, 2011, from http://www.aacap.org/galleries/FactsForFamilies/17_children_of_alchoholics.pdf; James, S. D. (2008, September 10). Children of alcoholics forced into adulthood. *abcnews.com*. Retrieved from http://abcnews.go.com/Health/story?id=5770753&page=5770751.

College Students

Alcohol abuse is also a problem on college and university campuses across the United States. Based on the SAMHSA survey evidence discussed earlier, full-time college students ages 18–22 drink more often and more heavily than their peers who are not in college (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2008).Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2008). Underage alcohol use among full-time college students. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from http://oas.samhsa.gov/2k6/college/collegeUnderage.htm. Among full-time college students ages 18–20, who are all too young to drink legally, about 40 percent have engaged in binge drinking in the past month, and 17 percent have engaged in heavy drinking as defined earlier. Binge drinking on and off campus is so common that binge drinkers consume 91 percent of all the alcohol that college students drink.

Binge drinking by college students has many serious consequences (Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2008; National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, 2007).Center for Science in the Public Interest. (2008). Binge drinking on college campuses. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from http://www.cspinet.org/booze/collfact1.htm; National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. (2007). *Wasting the best and the brightest: Substance abuse at America's colleges and universities*. New York, NY: Author. The following are consequences with approximate figures:

- Binge drinkers are much more likely than other students to miss class, get poor grades, be injured, have unprotected sex, and to drive after drinking.
- Six hundred thousand college students suffer alcohol-related injuries (from motor vehicle crashes and other accidents) each year, and 1,700 die from these injuries.
- Thirty thousand college students need medical attention annually to treat alcohol overdosing.
- Seven hundred thousand students are assaulted annually by a student who has been drinking, and three hundred students die from these assaults.
- Students who attend colleges with high rates of binge drinking are more likely to experience sleep disruption, property damage, and physical and sexual assaults than those who attend colleges with low rates of binge drinking.

Tobacco and Nicotine

Nicotine, the major drug in tobacco, is another legal but very dangerous drug. As we saw earlier, its use kills four times as many people every year as those killed by alcohol use. Tobacco is a slow poison. If it were not already a legal drug used by millions, and a company had just manufactured cigarettes for the first time, the Food and Drug Administration would never approve this product. Fortunately for tobacco companies, nicotine does not distort perception the way that alcohol and many other psychoactive drugs do. Someone smoking or otherwise using tobacco can safely drive a car, operate machinery, and so forth, and someone "under the influence" of tobacco does not become violent.



Tobacco is a slow poison. If it were a new drug, it would not be approved for public consumption.

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If you have ever watched any number of pre-1970s movies or television shows like “Mad Men” that portray life back then, you know that the United States used to have a tobacco culture the way it now has an alcohol culture. Many, many people smoked cigarettes, and a large number smoked cigars or pipes. This particular drug culture began to abate in the 1970s after much evidence mounted about the deaths and other serious health effects of tobacco use and especially about the dangers of second-hand smoke. Whereas college students a generation ago often sat in smoke-filled classrooms and Americans generally sat in smoke-filled restaurants and other venues, today most Americans can count on being in enclosed public spaces in which smoking is banned.

Even so, we have already seen that more than one-fourth of Americans 12 and older, or some 70 million people, are still current users (past month) of tobacco. Almost one-fifth of American adults (18 and older), or 45.3 million adults, smoke cigarettes daily or occasionally (King, Dube, Kaufmann, Shaw, & Pechacek, 2011).King, B., Dube, S., Kaufmann, R., Shaw, L., & Pechacek, T.

(2011). Vital signs: Current cigarette smoking among adults aged ≥18 years—United States, 2005–2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 60*(35), 1207–1212. Thanks to the greater knowledge about tobacco's health effects, public education campaigns about these effects, heavy taxes on cigarettes, and changing attitudes about tobacco, these numbers represent a significant decline from a generation ago.

Tobacco use causes more preventable death and illness in the United States than any other cause of death; if no one used tobacco, the more than 400,000 tobacco-related deaths each year would not occur. As we think about tobacco, this startling statistic needs to be kept in mind: *About half of all cigarette smokers will one day die from a premature death caused by a smoking-related illness* (King et al., 2011).King, B., Dube, S., Kaufmann, R., Shaw, L., & Pechacek, T. (2011). Vital signs: Current cigarette smoking among adults aged ≥18 years—United States, 2005–2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 60*(35), 1207–1212. To repeat what was said just earlier, nicotine is a slow poison.

Tobacco kills in several ways. Smoking causes 80–90 percent of all lung cancers, and it greatly increases the risk of emphysema and other lung disease, coronary heart disease, and stroke. In addition to lung cancer, tobacco use also causes several other cancers, including bladder cancer, cervical cancer, esophageal cancer, stomach cancer, and throat cancer. Women who smoke are at greater risk for lower bone density and hip fracture when they get older.

The economics of tobacco use are also worth knowing. Americans spend about $90 billion annually on tobacco products, with most of this amount spent on cigarettes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Economic facts about US tobacco production and use. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/economics/econ_facts/. They purchase more than 300 billion cigarettes annually, with most of the cigarettes sold by three companies. Cigarette smoking is estimated to cost almost $200 billion annually in medical expenses and lost economic productivity. This works out to a national economic loss of about $10.50 for every pack of cigarettes that is sold.

One interesting and very important fact about the economics of cigarette smoking is what happens when the cost of cigarettes is increased. Most smokers begin their deadly habit during adolescence or young adulthood. Because this is a period of their lives when they do not have much money, increases in the cost of cigarettes are particularly useful in persuading some of these young people not to buy cigarettes. Government data indicate that every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes reduces cigarette consumption among young people by 4 percent (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Economic facts about US tobacco production and use. Retrieved September 20, 2011, from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/economics/econ_facts/. A similar but smaller effect occurs among older smokers.

Earlier we said that the alcohol industry plays a major role in the amount of drinking that occurs in the United States. The same is true of the tobacco industry and smoking. This industry spends about $15 billion annually—or an average of $41 million daily—in advertising, sponsorship of public events, and other activities to promote its deadly product, and for many years hid or distorted data about the deadly effects of cigarette smoking (Brandt, 2009).Brandt, A. (2009). *The cigarette century: The rise, fall, and deadly persistence of the product that defined America*. New York, NY: Basic Books. Because of funding cutbacks during the recent faltering economy, the states have reduced their media campaigns and other efforts aimed at reducing smoking. This reduction, combined with the tobacco industry's huge promotional spending, leads one public health professor to lament, "The tobacco companies are winning the battle" (Martin, 2011).Martin, T. W. (2011, September 6). Fewer Americans are smoking, and those who do puff less. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from http://blogs.wsj.com/health/2011/2009/2006/fewer-americans-are-smoking-and-those-who-do-puff-less/.

Illegal Drugs

The SAMHSA survey also gathers data from its thousands of respondents about illegal drug use. Table 7.4 presents these data for several illegal drugs and shows that use of these drugs is far from rare.

Table 7.4 Prevalence of Illegal Drug Use, Ages 12 and Older, 2010*

	Lifetime	Past year	Past month
Any illegal drug	47.1	15.3	8.9

* Percentage using in designated time period

† Includes stimulants

	Lifetime	Past year	Past month
Illegal drug other than marijuana	30.0	8.1	3.6
Marijuana/hashish	41.9	11.5	6.9
Cocaine/crack	14.7	1.8	0.6
Hallucinogens	14.8	1.8	0.5
Heroin	1.6	0.2	0.1
Stimulants	8.5	1.1	0.4
Nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs†	20.4	6.3	2.7

* Percentage using in designated time period

† Includes stimulants

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). *Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings*. Rockville, MD: Author.

The following figure from Table 7.5 is striking: 47.1 percent of all Americans ages 12 and older have used an illegal drug at least once in their lifetimes. This percentage translates to almost 120 million people. In terms of lifetime use, the single most popular illegal drug is easily marijuana, but 30 percent of Americans, or 76 million people, have used an illegal drug other than marijuana. Almost 15 percent, or more than 37 million people, have used cocaine/crack or hallucinogens, and more than 20 percent, or almost 52 million people, have used prescription drugs illegally. These percentages and the numbers of people associated with them all indicate that lifetime illegal drug use in the United States is widespread.

Despite this fact, most public health experts are primarily concerned with current (past month) illegal drug use. The percentages for past-month (and also past-year) use in Table 7.5 are noticeably smaller than those for lifetime use. They indicate that most people who have used illegal drugs in their lifetimes are no longer using them, or at least have not used them in the past year or past month. Most of these lifetime users tried their illegal drug once, twice, or a few times and then stopped using it, and some may have used it more often but then stopped. In any event, it is the current, past-month users who raise the most concern for our society in general and for the public health and legal communities and other sectors of our society that deal with illegal drug use and its effects.

In looking at current illegal drug use, we see that 8.9 percent of the public falls into this category. This percentage translates to almost 23 million Americans, no small number by any means. Their favorite illegal drug is marijuana (and hashish), but 3.6 percent, or 9 million people, have used an illegal drug other than marijuana in the past month. These users favor prescription drugs used for nonmedical reasons. Despite the publicity that cocaine/crack still receives, less than 1 percent of the public has used it in the past month, and less than 2 percent has used it in the past year. These small percentages, though, still translate to 1.5 million people and 5.5 million people, respectively.

The percentages in Table 7.4 underestimate the problem of illegal drug use in at least two respects. First, the SAMHSA survey does not include people whose illegal drug use is especially high: the homeless, runaway teenagers, jail and prison inmates, and youths in detention centers. Second, and conversely, the SAMHSA survey includes people whose illegal drug use is relatively low—namely, young adolescents and people in their middle age and older years. For this reason, it is instructive to examine the prevalence of illegal drug use among the people who are in their “prime” ages for it: those who are 18–20 years old. Accordingly, Table 7.5 presents the appropriate figures for Americans in this age group.

Table 7.5 Prevalence of Illegal Drug Use, Ages 18–20, 2010*

	Lifetime	Past year	Past month

* Percentage using in designated time period

† Includes stimulants

	Lifetime	Past year	Past month
Any illegal drug	52.8	37.7	23.1
Illegal drug other than marijuana	31.2	19.1	8.0
Marijuana/hashish	46.4	32.7	20.3
Cocaine/crack	8.5	4.1	1.2
Hallucinogens	14.1	7.9	2.3
Heroin	1.6	0.5	0.2
Stimulants	7.8	3.9	1.3
Nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs†	24.5	14.5	5.9
* Percentage using in designated time period			
† Includes stimulants			

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). *Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings*. Rockville, MD: Author.

Take a moment to compare the percentages in Table 7.5 for ages 18–20 to the percentages in Table 7.4 for ages 12 and older. When you do this, you will see that past-year and past-month illegal drug use is generally much higher for people ages 18–20 than for everyone 12 and older. More than one-third of the 18–20 age group have used an illegal drug in the past year, and almost one-fourth are current users, having used an illegal drug in the past month. As with the 12 and older population, their drug of choice is clearly marijuana, with nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs a distant second.

This last statement is important to keep in mind. In terms of percentages, the major illegal drug is marijuana. Very low percentages of Americans use other illegal drugs when we consider current use and past-year use, although a greater number have experimented with other illegal drugs in their lifetimes. As we have seen, however, the low percentages for the other illegal drugs still translate into millions of Americans who are current users of illegal drugs other than marijuana. It is also true that drugs like heroin and cocaine/crack are used more heavily in large cities than in smaller cities and towns and rural areas. Although these drugs are only rarely used nationwide, they are a particular problem in large urban areas.

With this backdrop in mind, we now discuss a few illegal drugs in further detail.

Marijuana

As we have seen, marijuana is easily the most widely used illegal drug in the United States. The percentages for marijuana use in Table 7.4 translate to 106 million people who have ever used marijuana, 29 million people who used it in the past year, and 17 million people who used it in the past month (current users). As Table 7.5 showed, marijuana use is especially high among young people: One-third of people ages 18–20 have used marijuana in the past year, and one-fifth are current users.

Marijuana use can cause several problems (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2010).National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2010). InfoFacts: Marijuana. Retrieved September 22, 2011, from http://www.nida.nih.gov/infofacts/marijuana.html. Marijuana distorts perception, impairs coordination, and can cause short-term memory loss, and people who are high from marijuana may be unable to safely drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. In addition, regular pot smokers are at risk for respiratory problems, though not lung cancer. Chronic marijuana use is also associated with absence from school and the workplace and with social relationship problems, although it is difficult to determine whether marijuana is causing these effects or whether the association exists because someone with personal problems begins using marijuana regularly.

Despite these problems, marijuana is almost certainly the most benign illegal drug in terms of health and social consequences, and it is also much more benign than either alcohol or tobacco (Drug Policy Alliance, 2011; Faupel et al., 2010).Drug Policy Alliance. (2011). Marijuana facts. Retrieved September 22, 2011, from http://www.drugpolicy.org/facts/drug-facts/marijuana-facts; Faupel, C. E., Horowitz, A. M., & Weaver., G. S. (2010). *The sociology of American drug use*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. As

noted earlier, these latter two drugs kill about 520,000 Americans annually. In contrast, marijuana has probably never killed anyone, and its use has not been associated with any cancers. Alcohol use is a risk factor for violent behavior, but marijuana use is a risk factor for mellow behavior; if everyone who now uses alcohol instead smoked marijuana, our violent crime rate would probably drop significantly! Despite some popular beliefs, marijuana is generally not physiologically addictive, it does not reduce ambition and motivation, and it does not act as a "gateway drug" that leads to the use of more dangerous drugs (Hanson, Venturelli, & Fleckenstein, 2012).Hanson, G. R., Venturelli, P. J., & Fleckenstein, A. E. (2012). *Drugs and society* (11th ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett. A review of the evidence on marijuana summarized research findings as follows: "Studies of long-term marijuana smokers do not produce gross or major clinical, psychiatric, psychological, or social difference between users and nonusers, or between heavier and lighter users" (Goode, 2008, p. 247).Goode, E. (2008). *Drugs in American society* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

While not entirely safe, then, marijuana is much safer, both on an individual basis and on a societal basis, than either alcohol or tobacco. Even so, it remains an illegal drug. This fact underscores our earlier observation that the legality or illegality of drugs has no logical basis. If the personal and social harm caused by a drug determined whether it is legal or not, then it would be logical for marijuana to be legal and for alcohol or tobacco to be illegal.

For better or worse, though, the millions of marijuana users have broken the law. In most states, marijuana possession is a crime punishable by a jail or prison term that depends on the amount of marijuana involved. Fourteen states (Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon) have decriminalized simple possession of small amounts of marijuana: They treat possession as a minor offense similar to a traffic violation and punish it with only a small fine. Most of these states decriminalized the drug in the 1970s after a national commission with members appointed by the US Congress and by President Richard Nixon recommended taking this action. There is no evidence that marijuana use in these states increased compared to use in the states that have not decriminalized marijuana (Beckett & Herbert, 2008).Beckett, K., & Herbert, S. (2008). *The consequences and costs of marijuana prohibition*. Seattle, WA: American Civil Liberties Union of Washington State. In fact, marijuana use in the nation declined sharply in the 1980s, the first decade after decriminalization began, both in the states that decriminalized pot possession and in the states that did not decriminalize it.

Cocaine

Cocaine produces a high that is considered more pleasurable than that for any other drug. According to sociologist Erich Goode (2008, p. 288)Goode, E. (2008). *Drugs in American society* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill., "Cocaine's principal effects are exhilaration, elation, and euphoria—voluptuous, joyous feelings accompanied by a sense of grandiosity." As a stimulant, cocaine also increases energy, alertness, and a sense of self-confidence. It is not physiologically addictive, but it is considered psychologically addictive: The high it produces is so pleasurable that some users find they need to keep using it.



Cocaine is a particularly addictive drug because of the high degree of pleasurable feelings it causes.

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Cocaine is made from coca plants grown in South America. It most often appears in a powdered form that is sniffed (or, to use the more common term for this method, snorted). The high it produces takes some time to occur but may last up to thirty minutes once it does arrive. A more potent form, crack cocaine (or, more commonly, crack), is made by heating a mixture of powdered cocaine, baking soda, and water. A user then heats the mixture that remains and breathes in the vapors that result. Crack produces an immediate, intense high and is a relatively inexpensive drug. These features made crack a very popular drug when it was first introduced into US cities in the 1980s (Faupel et al. 2010).Faupel, C. E., Horowitz, A. M., & Weaver., G. S. (2010). *The sociology of American drug use*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Street gangs fought each other to control its distribution and sale, much as organized crime gangs fought each other over alcohol distribution and sale during Prohibition.

Cocaine and crack use has declined since the 1970s and 1980s, but, as Table 7.5 showed, almost 15 percent of the public has used cocaine at least once; this number translates to some 37 million Americans. Still, past-year use is only 1.8 percent, and past-month (current) use is only 0.6 percent. Cocaine use thus must be considered rare in percentage terms. At the same time, these percentages translate to 4.5 million and 1.5 million Americans, respectively. These are not small numbers. Moreover, past-year and past-month cocaine use is higher among young people, as Table 7.5 showed. Further, crack use remains a problem in the nation's urban areas.

In terms of health risks, cocaine is a much more dangerous drug than marijuana. As a stimulant, cocaine speeds up the central nervous system. Because it does so much more intensely than most other stimulants, its use poses special dangers for the cardiovascular system (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2011).National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2011). Cocaine: Abuse and addiction. Retrieved September 27, 2011, from http://www.nida.nih.gov/researchreports/cocaine/effects.html. In particular, it can disrupt the heart's normal rhythm and cause ventricular fibrillations, and it can speed up the heart and raise blood pressure. An overdose of cocaine can thus be deadly, and long-term use produces an increased risk of stroke, seizure, and heart disease. Because cocaine also constricts blood vessels in the brain, long-term use raises the risk of attention deficit, memory loss, and other cognitive problems. Long-term abuse has also caused panic attacks, paranoia, and even psychosis.

Heroin

Heroin is derived from opium (and more immediately from morphine, an opium derivative) and is almost certainly the most notorious opiate. It was one of the popular opiate drugs that, as discussed earlier, were used so widely during the late nineteenth century. Heroin was first marketed as a painkiller and cough suppressant by the company that makes Bayer aspirin. As the United States became more concerned about opium use, Bayer Laboratories discontinued heroin marketing in 1910, and heroin, like other opiates, was banned under the 1914 Harrison Narcotic Act.

Although Table 7.4 shows that its use is minuscule in percentage terms, these percentages translate to 600,000 people who have used heroin in the past year, and 240,000 who have used in the past month. Because these users are concentrated in the nation's large cities, heroin, like crack, is a special problem for these areas.

Like other narcotics, heroin use produces a feeling of euphoria. After it is injected, "the user feels a flash, a rush, which has been described as an intense, voluptuous, orgasmlike sensation. Following this is the feeling of well-being, tranquility, ease, and calm, the sensation that everything in the user's life is just fine. Tensions, worries, problems, the rough edges of life—all seem simply to melt away" (Goode, 2008, pp. 308–309).Goode, E. (2008). *Drugs in American society* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Although heroin use is uncommon, it continues to capture the public's concern more than perhaps any other illegal drug. As sociologist Goode (2008, pp. 307–308)Goode, E. (2008). *Drugs in American society* (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw Hill. has observed,

For decades, it was the most feared, the most dreaded, the "hardest" drug; heroin has virtually defined the drug problem. In spite of being somewhat overshadowed since the mid-1980s by cocaine, and specifically crack, heroin probably remains the single substance the American public is most likely to point to as an example of a dangerous drug. Until recently, disapproval of any level of heroin use was greater than for any other drug. And, until recently, heroin addicts were the most stigmatized of all drug users. Heroin is the epitome of the illicit street drug. Its association in the public mind with street crime, even today, is probably stronger than for any other drug. The stereotype of the junkie is that he or she is by nature a lowlife, an outcast, a "deviant," a dweller in the underworld, an unsavory, untrustworthy character to be avoided at any cost.

Users typically take heroin into their body by injecting it into a vein. This mode of administration is undoubtedly a major reason for the public's very negative image of heroin users. Indeed, the image of a heroin addict "shooting up" is one that has appeared in many movies and television shows past and present. Many heroin addicts share their needles, a practice that increases their risk of contracting HIV and hepatitis.

The public's image and concern about heroin is partly deserved in some ways and partly undeserved in other ways. Like other opiates, heroin is extremely physiologically addictive, although not as addictive as nicotine. But also like other opiates, heroin does not damage body organs. The emaciated look we often associate with heroin users stems not from the drug itself but from the low-caliber lifestyles that heroin addicts tend to live and their decisions to spend the little money they have on heroin rather than on food and a healthier lifestyle. An overdose of heroin can certainly kill, just as overdoses of other drugs can kill. One reason heroin overdoses occur is that heroin users cannot know for sure the purity of the heroin they buy illegally and thus may inject an unsafe dose to get high.

Prescription Drug Abuse

Table 7.4 showed that about one-fifth of Americans have used prescription drugs for nonmedical purposes. This type of use is illegal. It constitutes the most widespread illegal drug use other than marijuana use and has grown in recent years, especially among adolescents. The prescription drugs that are most often abused are those containing narcotics, tranquilizers, and stimulants; two of the most common brands that are abused are OxyContin and Vicodin. Because prescription drugs are beneficial for so many people even if they are abused, our nation faces a special difficulty in dealing with the abuse of these drugs. As the head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse explains, "The challenges we face are much more complex because we need to address the needs of patients in pain, while protecting those at risk for substance use disorders" (Zuger, 2011, p. D1).Zuger, A. (2011, June 14). A general in the drug war. *New York Times*. p. D1. Thus according to a news report, "These drugs must be somehow legal and illegal, encouraged yet discouraged, tightly regulated yet easily available" (Zuger, 2011, p. D1).Zuger, A. (2011, June 14). A general in the drug war. *New York Times*, p. D1.



Many prescription drug abusers use drugs obtained from their own prescriptions or from prescriptions of friends or relatives.

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Most prescription drug abusers have their own prescriptions or obtain their drugs from friends, acquaintances, or relatives who have their own prescriptions. Whatever the source, some of these prescriptions are obtained legitimately—for actual medical conditions—and then abused, and some are obtained after feigning a medical condition. Many experts fault physicians for overprescribing painkillers and other prescription drugs.

Prescription drug abuse is thought to be growing for two reasons (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2005).National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2005). *Prescription drugs: Abuse and addiction*. Washington, DC: Author. First, physicians' prescriptions for painkillers and other drugs continue to rise, creating a greater supply of prescription drugs that can be abused. Second, online pharmacies and pain clinics have made it easier to obtain prescription drugs, with or without an actual prescription.

The Note 7.14 "Applying Social Research" box discusses the roots of adolescent prescription drug abuse in family and school factors. The importance of these factors reinforces the sociological view that the origins of drug use often lie beyond the individual

and in the social environment.

Applying Social Research

Prescription Drug Abuse by Adolescents

Despite the importance of prescription drug abuse, social science research on its causes is relatively sparse. In one of the first studies to examine the social origins of adolescent prescription drug abuse, sociologist Jason A. Ford analyzed data on adolescents in the national survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that is discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Drawing on the large body of work that attributes drug use in part to weak social bonds, Ford reasoned that prescription drug abuse should be higher among adolescents who have weaker bonds to their parents and also weaker bonds to their schools.

For his measure of parental bonds, Ford used several questions that asked adolescents about their relationship with their parents, including whether parents feel proud of them and praise them for doing a good job, and whether their parents help them with their homework and limit their time out with friends on a school night. For his measure of school bonds, he used several questions that asked adolescents such things as whether they liked going to school and whether they found their schooling meaningful and important. His measure of prescription drug abuse relied on the adolescents' self-reports of whether they had used any prescription drug for nonmedical purposes in the past year.

Controlling for gender, race, and other factors, Ford found support for his hypotheses: prescription drug abuse was higher among adolescents with weaker bonds to their parents and also weaker bonds to their schools.

These results have important implications for efforts to reduce prescription drug abuse by adolescents. They suggest that efforts by our society to strengthen families and to improve our schools may well have a significant, beneficial side-effect: lower prescription drug abuse by adolescents.

Source: Ford, 2009Ford, J. A. (2009). Nonmedical Prescription Drug Use Among Adolescents: The Influence of Bonds to Family and School. *Youth & Society, 40*(3), 336–352.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The distinction between legal drugs and illegal drugs has no logical basis; legal drugs cause much more harm than illegal drugs.
- Alcohol and tobacco kill more than 500,000 Americans annually. Binge drinking on campuses results in accidents and assaults involving several hundred thousand college students annually.
- Marijuana is by far the most commonly used illegal drug. The low prevalence of other illegal drugs still amounts to millions of people using these drugs annually.

FOR YOUR REVIEW

1. Do you agree or disagree that the distinction between legal drugs and illegal drugs is not logical? Explain your answer.
2. Do you agree that binge drinking is a problem that campuses should address, or do you think that it's a relatively harmless activity that lets students have some fun? Explain your answer.

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2.1.3: Social Patterning of Drug Use

Learning Objectives

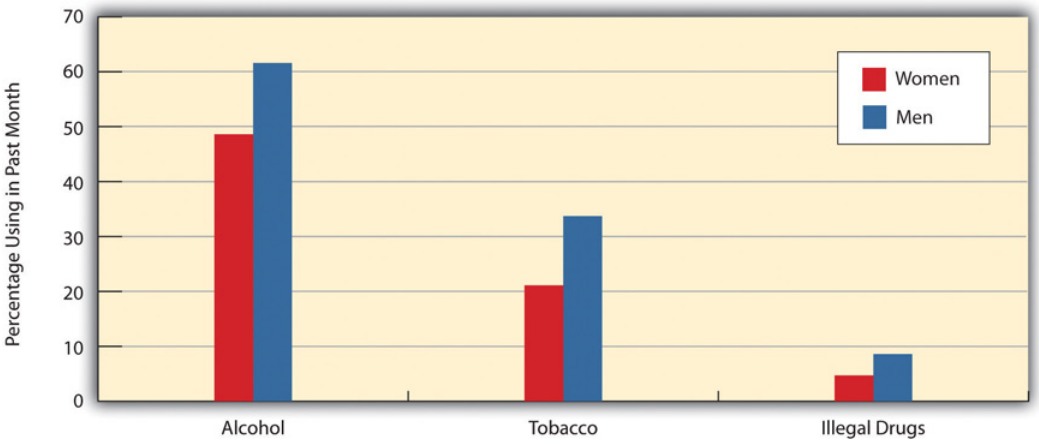
1. Outline the nature of gender differences in drug use.
2. Understand whether racial and ethnic differences in drug use exist.
3. Explain whether education and religiosity are related to drug use.

It is a sociological truism that our sociodemographic backgrounds—gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and so forth—influence many of our behaviors and attitudes. Drug use is no different. By examining the social patterning of drug use, we can see which kinds of people, in terms of their sociodemographic backgrounds, are more or less at risk for using drugs. And by understanding these sociodemographic differences, we begin to understand why some people are more likely than others to use drugs. Our examination of these differences will rely heavily on data from the SAMHSA survey discussed earlier and focus on past-month differences in alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use (all illegal drugs combined).

Gender

In the study of crime and deviance, gender is an important predictor: Males are more likely than females to commit the more serious forms of crime and deviance, such as homicide, robbery, and burglary. This pattern generally holds true for drug use of various types. Figure 7.2 “Gender and Prevalence of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drug Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Past Month)” shows that men are more likely than women to use alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs. In related data, men are also more than twice as likely as women to engage in binge drinking (30.7 percent compared to 13.8 percent) and heavy drinking (9.7 percent compared to 2.8 percent) as defined earlier.

Figure 7.2 Gender and Prevalence of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drug Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Past Month)



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). *Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings*. Rockville, MD: Author.

Why do these gender differences exist? A common thread underlines gender differences in criminal behavior and in drug use of various kinds, and that is *masculinity* (Lindsey, 2011). Compared to girls, boys are raised to be more active, assertive, and daring, and to be less concerned about the effects of their behavior on others. As they grow older, these traits make them more likely to use drugs and also to commit various types of crimes. Ironically, the way that most parents raise their sons helps make their sons more likely than their daughters to drink, smoke, and use illegal drugs once they reach adolescence and in the many decades of their adulthood.



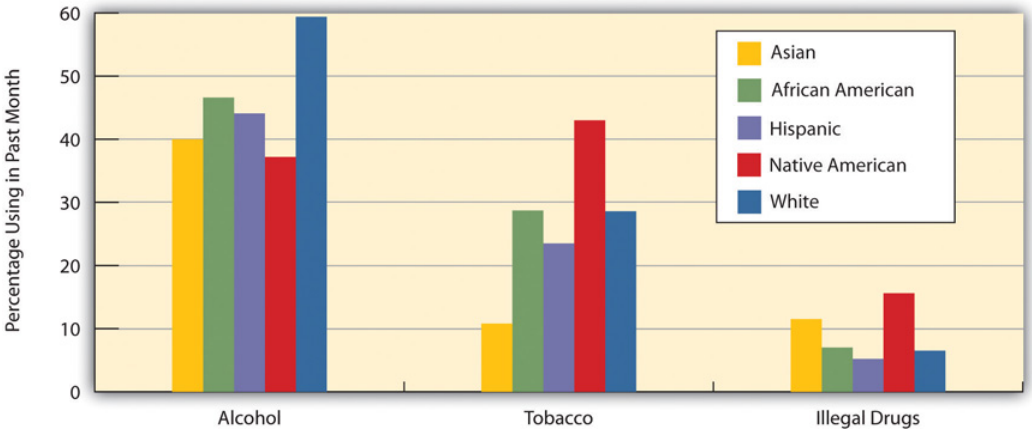
On the average, males drink alcohol more often and more heavily than females, and they are also more likely to use other types of drugs. (David, Bergin, Emmett, and Elliott – IMG_3110 – CC BY 2.0.)

In an important exception to the general gender difference just discussed, females are more likely than males to use prescription drugs for nonmedical reasons (Ford, 2009). The reasons for this counterintuitive finding are unclear, but scholars speculate that because girls and women obtain more prescription drugs than do boys and men, their greater nonmedical use of prescription drugs reflects the fact that they have more access to these drugs in the first place.

Race and Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic differences in drug use of various types exist to some extent but are less clear-cut than the gender differences we just examined (see Figure 7.3 “Race/Ethnicity and Prevalence of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drug Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Past Month)”). For alcohol use, whites have the highest rate of drinking, and Native Americans, despite the popular image that they have alcohol problems, have the lowest rate. For tobacco use, Native Americans have the highest rate of use, and Asians have the lowest rate. For illegal drugs, Native Americans again have the highest rate of use, and Hispanics have the lowest rate. Note that African Americans have roughly the same illegal drug use rate as whites, and have lower rates of alcohol and tobacco use than whites do. Although many people believe that African Americans are more likely than whites to use drugs, research data show that this belief is a myth.

Figure 7.3 Race/Ethnicity and Prevalence of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drug Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Past Month)

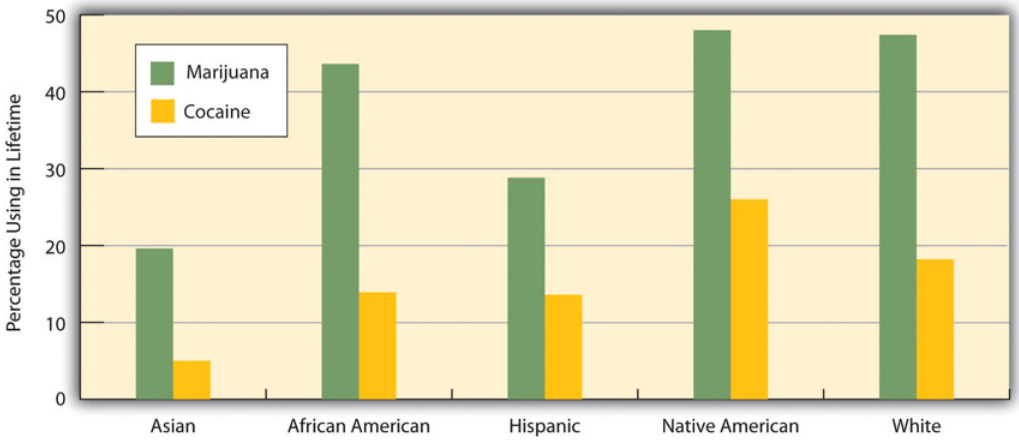


Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings. Rockville, MD: Author.

The illegal drugs category includes many types of drugs. We do not have space to illustrate racial/ethnic differences in the use of each of these drugs, but we will examine differences in marijuana and cocaine (including crack) use. Figure 7.4 “Race/Ethnicity and Prevalence of Marijuana and Cocaine Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Lifetime)” shows these differences for lifetime use. Despite some minor differences, African Americans, Native Americans, and whites have the highest lifetime use of marijuana, while Asians and Hispanics have the lowest use. Turning to cocaine, Native Americans have the highest lifetime use, and Asians have the lowest use. Note again that African Americans have a lower rate of lifetime use than whites; this racial

difference will be relevant for our discussion toward the end of the chapter of the racial impact of the legal war on drugs since the 1970s.

Figure 7.4 Race/Ethnicity and Prevalence of Marijuana and Cocaine Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Lifetime)

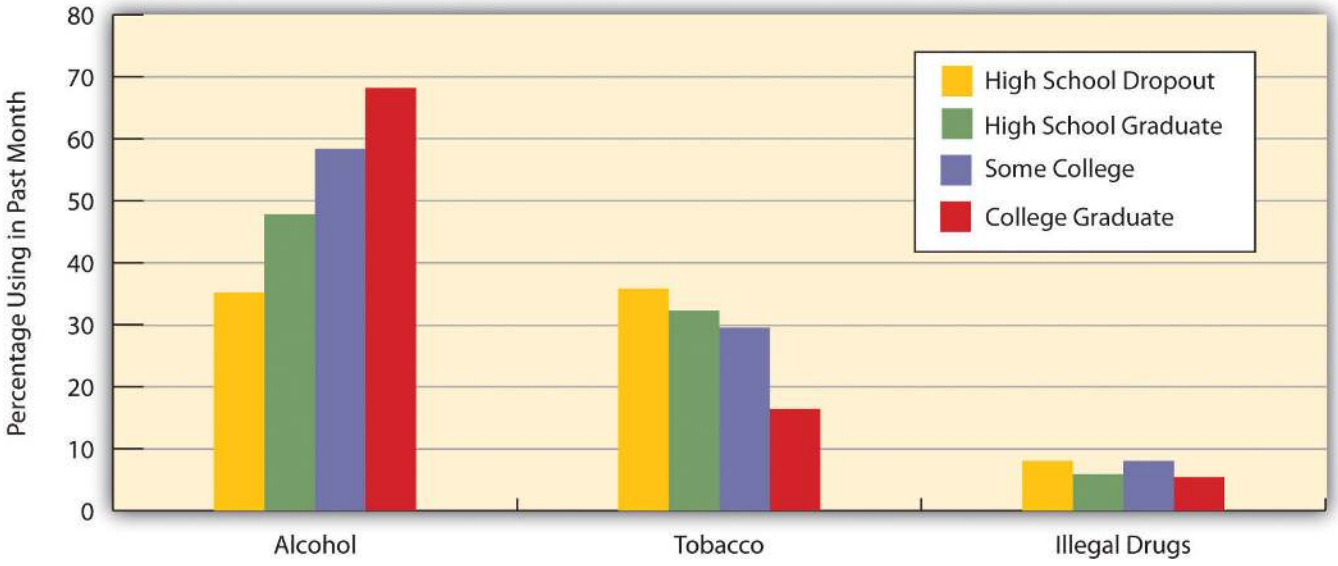


Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings. Rockville, MD: Author.

Education

Education differences in drug use depend on the type of drug (see Figure 7.5). For alcohol, higher levels of education are associated with a higher likelihood of drinking. One possible reason for this association is that people with lower levels of education are more likely to be religious, and people who are religious are less likely to drink. For tobacco, higher levels of education are associated with lower levels of tobacco use. In particular, college graduates are much less likely to use tobacco than people without a college degree. For illegal drugs, there is no clear association between education and use of these drugs, although college graduates report the lowest past-month use.

Figure 7.5 Education and Prevalence of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drug Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Past Month)

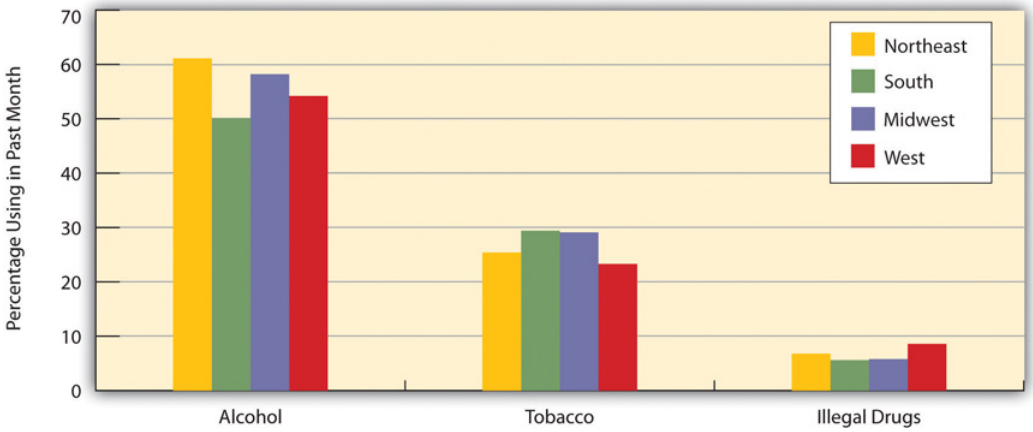


Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings. Rockville, MD: Author.

Region of Country

The regions of the United States differ in many attitudes and behaviors, and one of these behaviors is drug use (see Figure 7.6). The regional differences are not large, but the South has lowest rate of alcohol use, in part reflecting the fact that it is the most religious region in the nation. The South and Midwest have the highest rates of tobacco use, while the West has the lowest rate, befitting its image as a "healthy" region. However, the West also has the highest rate of illegal drug use, although its use is only slightly higher than the other regions' use.

Figure 7.6 Region of Country and Prevalence of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drug Use, Ages 26 and Older, 2010 (Percentage Using in Past Month)

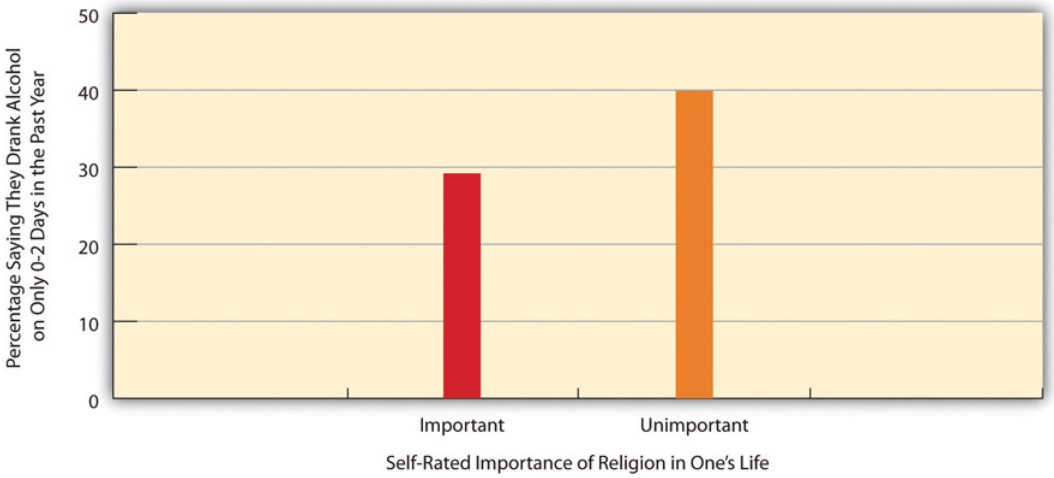


Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2011). Results from the 2010 national survey on drug use and health: Summary of national findings. Rockville, MD: Author.

Religiosity

A growing number of studies finds that **religiosity**—how religious someone is—affects how often people use various drugs: The more religious people are, the lower their drug use; conversely, the less religious they are, the higher their drug use (Desmond, Soper, & Purpura, 2009).Desmond, S. A., Soper, S. E., & Purpura, D. J. (2009). Religiosity, moral beliefs, and delinquency: Does the effect of religiosity on delinquency depend on moral beliefs? *Sociological Spectrum, 29*, 51–71. We can see evidence of this relationship in Figure 7.7, which presents data for a nationwide sample of youths ages 17–18. Those who say religion is important in their lives report less drinking (i.e., on only 0–2 days in the past year) than those who say religion is unimportant in their lives.

Figure 7.7 Religiosity and Drinking among Youths Ages 17–18 (Percentage Saying They Drank Alcohol on Only 0–2 Days in the Past Year)



Source: National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Wave I. (2012). Retrieved from http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cgi-bin/SDA/DSDR/hsda?dsdr+21600-0001.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Drug use is socially patterned: Aspects of our sociodemographic backgrounds affect our likelihood of using various drugs.
- Perhaps the clearest social pattern involves gender, with males more likely than females to use and abuse alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.
- Despite common beliefs, the rate of illegal drug use is lower for African Americans than for whites.

FOR YOUR REVIEW

1. The text discusses five social patterns of drug use: gender, race/ethnicity, education, region of country, and religiosity. Taking into account these five sets of patterns, write a short essay in which you use this information to understand your own level of use (or nonuse) of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs.
2. Did it surprise you to read that illegal drug use is lower among African Americans than among whites? Why or why not?

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2.1.4: Explaining Drug Use

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the possible biological origins of drug addiction.
2. Explain why longitudinal research on personality traits and drug use is important.
3. Outline the aspects of the social environment that may influence drug use.

To know how to reduce drug use, we must first know what explains it. The major explanations for drug use come from the fields of biology, psychology, and sociology.

Biological Explanations

In looking at drug use, the field of biology focuses on two related major questions. First, how and why do drugs affect a person's behavior, mood, perception, and other qualities? Second, what biological factors explain why some people are more likely than others to use drugs?

Regarding the first question, the field of biology has an excellent understanding of how drugs work. The details of this understanding are beyond the scope of this chapter, but they involve how drugs affect areas in the brain and the neurotransmitters that cause a particular drug's effects. For example, cocaine produces euphoria and other positive emotions in part because it first produces an accumulation of dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to feelings of pleasure and enjoyment.



Research on identical twins suggests that alcoholism has a genetic basis.

Michael Dorausch – Identical Twins Jedward – CC BY-SA 2.0.

Regarding the second question, biological research is more speculative, but it assumes that some people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of drugs. These people are more likely to experience very intense effects and to become physiologically and/or psychologically addicted to a particular drug. To the extent this process occurs, the people in question are assumed to have a biological predisposition for drug addiction that is thought to be a genetic predisposition.

Most research on genetic predisposition has focused on alcohol and alcoholism (Hanson et al., 2012). Studies of twins find that identical twins are more likely than fraternal twins (who are not genetically identical) to both have alcohol problems or not to have

them. In addition, studies of children of alcoholic parents who are adopted by nonalcoholic parents find that these children are more likely than those born to nonalcoholic parents to develop alcohol problems themselves. Although a genetic predisposition for alcoholism might exist for reasons not yet well understood, there is not enough similar research on other types of drug addiction to assume that a genetic predisposition exists for these types. Many nonbiological factors also explain the use of, and addiction to, alcohol and other drugs. We now turn to these factors.

Psychological Explanations

Psychological explanations join biological explanations in focusing on why certain individuals are more likely than others to use drugs and to be addicted to drugs (Hanson et al., 2012). Some popular psychological explanations center on personality differences between drug users and nonusers. These explanations assume that users have personality traits that predispose them to drug use. These traits include low self-esteem and low self-confidence, low trust in others, and a need for thrills and stimulation. In effect, drug users have inadequate personalities, or personality defects, that make them prone to drug use, and once they start using drugs, their personality problems multiply.

One problem with research on personality explanations is methodological: If we find personality differences between drug users and nonusers, should we conclude that personality problems cause drug use, or is it possible that drug use causes personality problems? Most of the research on personality and drug use cannot answer this question adequately, since it studies drug users and nonusers at one point in time (*cross-sectional research*). To answer this question adequately, *longitudinal research*, which examines the same people over time, is necessary. Among initial drug abstainers at Time 1, if those with the personality traits mentioned earlier turn out to be more likely than those without the traits to be using drugs at Time 2, then we can infer that personality problems affect drug use rather than the reverse. Longitudinal research on personality and drug use that studies adolescents and college students does indeed find this causal sequence (Sher, Bartholow, & Wood, 2000). However, some scholars still question the importance of personality factors for drug use and addiction (Goode, 2012). They say these factors have only a small effect, if that, and they cite research questioning whether personality differences between users and nonusers in fact exist (Feldman, Boyer, Kumar, & Prout, 2011).

Other psychological explanations are based on the classic concept from behavioral psychology of *operant conditioning*—the idea that people and animals are more likely to engage in a behavior when they are rewarded, or reinforced, for it. These explanations assume that people use drugs because drugs are positive reinforcers in two respects. First, drugs provide pleasurable effects themselves and thus provide *direct reinforcement*. Second, drug use often is communal: People frequently use drugs (alcohol is certainly a prime example, but so are many other drugs) with other people, and they enjoy this type of social activity. In this manner, drug use provides *indirect reinforcement*.

Sociological Explanations

Sociological explanations emphasize the importance of certain aspects of the social environment—social structure, social bonds to family and school, social interaction, and culture—or drug use, depending on the type of drug. For drugs like heroin and crack that tend to be used mostly in large urban areas, the social structure, or, to be more precise, social inequality, certainly seems to matter. As sociologist Elliott Currie (1994, p. 3) has observed, the use of these drugs by urban residents, most of them poor and of color, reflects the impact of poverty and racial inequality: “Serious drug use is not evenly distributed: it runs ‘along the fault lines of our society.’ It is concentrated among some groups and not others, and has been for at least half a century.” This fact helps explain why heroin use grew in the inner cities during the 1960s, as these areas remained poor even as the US economy was growing. Inner-city youths were attracted to heroin because its physiological effects helped them forget about their situation and also because the heroin subculture—using an illegal drug with friends, buying the drug from dealers, and so forth—was an exciting alternative to the bleakness of their daily lives. Crack became popular in inner cities during the 1980s for the same reasons.

Social bonds to families and schools also make a difference. Adolescents with weak bonds to their families and schools, as measured by such factors as the closeness they feel to their parents and teachers, are more likely to use drugs of various types than adolescents with stronger bonds to their families and schools. Their weaker bonds prompt them to be less likely to accept conventional norms and more likely to use drugs and engage in other delinquent behavior.

Regarding social interaction, sociologists emphasize that *peer influences* greatly influence one’s likelihood of using alcohol, tobacco, and a host of other drugs (Hanson et al., 2012). Much and probably most drug use begins during adolescence, when peer influences are especially important. When our friends during this stage of life are drinking, smoking, or using other drugs, many of us want to fit in with the crowd and thus use one of these drugs ourselves. In a related explanation, sociologists also emphasize that society’s “drug culture” matters for drug use. For example, because we have a culture that so favors alcohol, many people drink

alcohol. And because we have a drug culture in general, it is no surprise, sociologically speaking, that drug use of many types is so common.

To the extent that social inequality, social interaction, and a drug culture matter for drug use, sociologists say, it is a mistake to view most drug use as stemming from an individual's biological or psychological problems. Although these problems do play a role for some individuals' use of some drugs, drug use as a whole stems to a large degree from the social environment and must be understood as a social problem, and not just as an individual problem.

Beyond these general explanations of why people use drugs, sociological discussions of drug use reflect the three sociological perspectives introduced in Chapter 1 "Understanding Social Problems"—functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism—as we shall now discuss. Table 7.6 "Theory Snapshot" summarizes this discussion.

Table 7.6 Theory Snapshot

Theoretical perspective	Contributions to understanding of drug use
Functionalism	Drug use is functional for several parties in society. It provides drug users the various positive physiological effects that drugs have; it provides the sellers of legal or illegal drugs a source of income; and it provides jobs for the criminal justice system and the various other parties that deal with drug use. At the same time, both legal drugs and illegal drugs contribute to dysfunctions in society.
Conflict theory	Much drug use in poor urban areas results from the poverty, racial inequality, and other conditions affecting people in these locations. Racial and ethnic prejudice and inequality help determine why some drugs are illegal as well as the legal penalties for these drugs. The large multinational corporations that market and sell alcohol, tobacco, and other legal drugs play a powerful role in the popularity of these drugs and lobby Congress to minimize regulation of these drugs.
Symbolic interactionism	Drug use arises from an individual's interaction with people who engage in drug use. From this type of social interaction, an individual learns how to use a drug and also learns various attitudes that justify drug use and define the effects of a drug as effects that are enjoyable.

Functionalism

Recall that functionalist theory emphasizes the need for social stability, the functions that different aspects of society serve for society's well-being, and the threats (or dysfunctions) to society's well-being posed by certain aspects of society. In line with this theory, sociologists emphasize that drug use may actually be functional for several members of society. For the people who use legal or illegal drugs, drug use is functional because it provides them the various positive physiological effects that drugs have. For the people who sell legal or illegal drugs, drug use is functional because it provides them a major source of income. Illegal drug use is even functional for the criminal justice system, as it helps provide jobs for the police, court officials, and prison workers who deal with illegal drugs. Legal and illegal drugs also provide jobs for the social service agencies and other organizations and individuals whose work focuses on helping people addicted to a drug. At the same time, drugs, whether legal or illegal, have the many dysfunctions for society that this chapter discussed earlier, and this fact must not be forgotten as we acknowledge the functions of drugs.

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory stresses the negative effects of social inequality and the efforts of the elites at the top of society's hierarchy to maintain their position. This theory helps us understand drugs and drug use in at least three respects. First, and as noted just earlier, much drug use in poor urban areas results from the poverty, racial inequality, and other conditions affecting people in these

locations. They turn to illegal drugs partly to feel better about their situation, and partly because the illegal drug market is a potentially great source of income that does not require even a high school degree.

Second, conflict theory emphasizes that racial and ethnic prejudice and inequality help determine why some drugs are illegal as well as the criminal penalties for these drugs. For example, the penalties for crack are much harsher, gram for gram, than those for powder cocaine, even though the two drugs are pharmacologically identical. Crack users are primarily poor African Americans in urban areas, while powder cocaine users are primarily whites, many of them at least fairly wealthy. These facts prompt many observers to say that the harsher penalties for crack are racially biased (Tonry, 2011). Other evidence for this argument of conflict theory is seen in the history of the illegality of opium, cocaine, and marijuana. As we discussed earlier, racial and ethnic prejudice played an important role in why these common drugs in the nineteenth century became illegal: prejudice against Chinese immigrants for opium, prejudice against African Americans for cocaine, and prejudice against Mexican Americans for marijuana.

Third, conflict theory emphasizes the huge influence that multinational corporations have in the marketing and sale of the legal drugs—alcohol, tobacco, and many prescription drugs—that often have harmful individual and societal consequences. To maximize their profits, these companies do their best, as noted earlier, to convince Americans and people in other nations to use their products. They also spend billions of dollars to lobby Congress. As also mentioned earlier, the tobacco industry hid for years evidence of the deadly effects of its products. All these efforts illustrate conflict theory's critical view of the role that corporations play in today's society.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism focuses on the interaction of individuals and on how they interpret their interaction. Given this focus, symbolic interactionism views social problems as arising from the interaction of individuals. As such, it understands drug use as a behavior arising from an individual's interaction with people who engage in drug use. From this type of social interaction, an individual learns how to use a drug and also learns various attitudes that justify drug use and define the effects of a drug as effects that are enjoyable.

A study of drug use that reflects this approach is Howard S. Becker's (1953) classic article, "Becoming a Marihuana User." Becker wrote that someone usually begins smoking marijuana in the presence of friends who are experienced marijuana users. This social interaction, he argued, is critical for new users to wish to continue using marijuana. To want to do so, they must learn three behaviors or perceptions from the experienced users who are "turning them on" to marijuana use. First, new users must learn how to smoke a joint (marijuana cigarette) by deeply inhaling marijuana smoke and holding in the smoke before exhaling. Second, they must perceive that the effects they feel after smoking enough marijuana (spatial distortion, hunger pangs, short-term memory loss) signify that they are *stoned* (under the influence of marijuana); their friends typically tell them that if they are feeling these effects, they are indeed stoned. Third, they must learn to define these effects as pleasurable; if people suddenly experience spatial distortion, intense hunger, and memory loss, they might very well worry they are having huge problems! To prevent this from happening, their friends say things to them such as, "Doesn't that feel great!" This and similar comments help reassure the new users that the potentially worrisome effects they are experiencing are not only bad ones but in fact very enjoyable ones.

Key Takeaways

- Biological theories assume that some people are especially vulnerable to drug addiction for genetic reasons.
- A popular set of psychological theories assumes that drug addiction results from certain personality traits and problems.
- Sociological theories attribute drug use to various aspects of the social environment, including peer influences, weak social bonds, and the larger drug culture.

For Your Review

1. When you think about the reasons for drug use and addiction, do you think biological factors, psychological factors, or the social environment play the most important role? Explain you answer.
2. Write a brief essay in which you discuss a time when your friends influenced you, or someone else you know, to use a legal or illegal drug.

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2.1.5: Drug Policy and the War on Illegal Drugs

Learning Objectives

1. Explain whether the DARE program is effective.
2. Outline the goals and examples of a harm reduction approach to drug use.
3. List the problems arising from the current legal war on illegal drugs.

For many decades, the United States has used several strategies to try to deal with drugs. These strategies generally fall into four categories: treatment, prevention, harm reduction, and, for certain drugs, criminalization and the use of the criminal justice system, or, as we will call it, the war on illegal drugs. We now turn to these strategies.

Treatment

Treatment programs are intended for people who already are using drugs, perceive they have a drug problem, and want to reduce or eliminate their drug use. This strategy is probably familiar to most readers, even if they have not used drugs themselves or at least have not had the benefit of a treatment program. Treatment programs often involve a group setting, but many drug users also receive individual treatment from a psychiatrist, psychologist, or drug counselor. Perhaps the most famous treatment program is Alcoholics Anonymous, a program that involves alcoholics meeting in a group setting, acknowledging their drinking problem and its effects on family members and other loved ones, and listening to each other talk about their situations. Other group settings are residential settings, sometimes called *detox units*. In these settings, people check themselves into an institution and stay there for several weeks until they and the professionals who treat them are satisfied. Perhaps the most famous residential treatment program is the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, California; this center was established by and named after an acknowledged alcoholic who was the wife of President Gerald Ford.



The Betty Ford Center is a residential detox unit for people with alcohol and other drug problems. Image courtesy of Betty Ford Center, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BETTYFORD.jpg.

In addition to or in conjunction with group treatment programs, individual treatment for drug addiction may involve the use of "good" drugs designed to help wean addicts off the drug to which they are addicted. For example, nicotine gum, patches, and other products are designed to help cigarette smokers stop smoking.

The various forms of treatment can be very effective for some addicts and less effective or not effective at all for other addicts; most treatment programs have a high failure rate (Goode, 2012). A sociological perspective suggests that however effective treatment might be for some people, the origins of drug use ultimately lie in the larger society—its social structure, social interaction, and the drug culture—and that these roots must be addressed for serious reductions in drug use to occur.

Prevention

Because it is always best to try to prevent a problem before it begins, an important strategy to deal with drug use involves prevention. The major prevention strategies involve drug education or drug testing (Faupel et al., 2010). Many education-based prevention programs focus on children and adolescents. This focus reflects the fact that use of most drugs begins during adolescence, and that if adolescents do not begin using drugs during this period of their lives, they are much less likely to do so when they become adults. Some education strategies follow what is called an *informational model*: they involve public-service advertising, the distribution of drug pamphlets in medical offices, and other such efforts. Several studies question the effectiveness of strategies based on this model (Faupel et al., 2010).

Other education programs take place in the secondary school system and on college campuses. The most famous such program is almost certainly DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), which involves police officers speaking to middle-school children. DARE programs have been carried out in more than 7,000 schools across the nation. However, several studies find that DARE programs do not generally reduce subsequent drug use among the children who attend them compared to children who do not attend them (Faupel et al., 2010).

Drug testing is very common in today's society, and you may well have been required to have a drug test as part of an application for a job, involvement in a school sport, or other activity. At least half of US workplaces now perform required drug tests. Drug testing is expensive, and many critics say it is not cost-effective in view of the low prevalence of illegal drug use in the United States (Faupel et al., 2010).

Harm Reduction

A third strategy involves harm reduction. As this term implies, this strategy attempts to minimize the harm caused by drugs. It recognizes that many people will use drugs despite efforts to prevent or persuade them from doing so and despite any punishment they might receive for using illegal drugs. Our nation is currently using a harm reduction approach with regard to alcohol and tobacco. It recognizes that tens of millions of people use these products, and designated-driving programs and other efforts try to minimize the considerable harm these two drugs cause.

A specific harm reduction strategy with regard to illegal drugs is the provision of clean, sterile needles for people who inject themselves with heroin, cocaine/crack, or other drugs. Many of these users share needles, and this sharing spreads HIV, hepatitis, and other diseases. If they have a supply to sterile needles, the reasoning goes, the transmission of these diseases will be reduced even if use of the drugs with the aid of the needles does not reduce. Critics say the provision of sterile needles in effect says that drug use is OK and may even encourage drug use. Proponents reply that needle-based drug use will occur whether or not sterile needles are provided, and that the provision of sterile needles does more good than harm. Other nations have adopted this type of harm reduction much more extensively than the United States.

Another harm reduction strategy involves the use of drug courts, which began in the 1990s and now number more than 2,500 across the United States. In these courts, drug offenders who have been arrested and found guilty are sentenced to drug treatment and counseling rather than to jail or prison. Evaluation studies show that the courts save much money compared to imprisoning drug offenders and that they are more effective than imprisonment in reducing the offenders' drug habit (Stinchcomb, 2010).

People Making a Difference

Law Enforcement against Prohibition

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP) is an organization of current and former police and other criminal justice professionals, including prosecutors, judges, and FBI agents, who advocate for the legalization of illegal drugs. Because many of these professionals were on the front lines in the war against drugs and often put their lives in danger, their views about drug policy cannot be dismissed lightly.

One of their members is MacKenzie Allen, a 65-year-old deputy sheriff who worked in Los Angeles and Seattle, including time as an undercover agent who bought illegal drugs and made countless arrests for drug offenses. Although Allen strongly disapproves of drug use, his many years in law enforcement led him to realize that the drug problem is best understood as a public health problem,

not a legal problem. He notes that the United States has lowered cigarette use through public education and without outlawing cigarettes. “Can you imagine the mayhem had we outlawed cigarettes?” he writes. “Can you envision the ‘cigarette cartels’ and the bloodbath that would follow? Yet, thanks to a public awareness campaign we’ve made a huge dent in tobacco use without arresting a single cigarette smoker.”

Allen adds that most of the problems associated with illegal drug use are actually the result of the laws against drugs. These laws create a huge illegal market, much of it involving violent cartels, he says, that promises strong profits for the manufacturers and sellers of illegal drugs. He is also critical of other aspects of the war on drugs:

If the colloquial definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, expecting a different result, what does that say about our “War on Drugs”? We’ve been pursuing this strategy for forty years. It has cost a trillion taxpayer dollars, thousands of lives (both law enforcement and civilians) and destroyed hundreds of thousands more by incarceration. Moreover, it undermines the safety of our communities by overcrowding our jails and prisons, forcing them to give early release to truly violent offenders.

Another LEAP member is Joseph D. McNamara, the former police chief of San Jose, California. McNamara also criticizes the violence resulting from the laws against drugs. “Like an increasing number of law enforcers,” he writes specifically about marijuana, “I have learned that most bad things about marijuana—especially the violence made inevitable by an obscenely profitable black market—are caused by the prohibition, not by the plant.” He continues, “Al Capone and his rivals made machine-gun battles a staple of 1920s city street life when they fought to control the illegal alcohol market. No one today shoots up the local neighborhood to compete in the beer market…How much did the [Mexican] cartels make last year dealing in Budweiser, Corona or Dos Equis? Legalization would seriously cripple their operations.”

As these statements indicate, the legal war on drugs has had many costs. It is difficult to know what to do about illegal drugs, but in bringing these costs to the attention of elected officials and the American public, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition is making a difference. For further information about LEAP, visit copssaylegalizedrugs.com.

Sources: Allen, 2001; Law Enforcement Against Prohibition, 2011; McNamara, 2010Allen, M. (2011, February 23). Why this cop asked the President about legalizing drugs. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mackenzie-allen/why-this-cop-asked-the-pr_b_827338.html; Law Enforcement Against Prohibition. (2011). *Ending the Drug War: A Dream Deferred*. Medford, MA: Author; McNamara, J. D. (2010, July 25). Legalize pot, former San Jose police chief says. *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved from http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/07/25/IN1K1EGQRJ.DTL.

The War on Illegal Drugs

The most controversial drug strategy involves the criminalization of many drugs and the use of the police and the rest of the criminal justice system to apprehend and punish the users, manufacturers, and sellers of illegal drugs. As the brief history of drug use at the beginning of this chapter indicated, the United States has banned certain drugs since the late nineteenth century, and it accelerated this effort during the 1970s and 1980s as concern grew about heroin, crack, and other drugs.

In judging the war on illegal drugs, two considerations should be kept in mind (Meier & Geis, 2007).Meier, R. F., & Geis, G. (2007). *Criminal justice and moral issues*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. One consideration is the *philosophical* question of the extent to which the government in a free society should outlaw behaviors that may be harmful even if people (let’s assume we are talking about legal adults) want to engage in them. Americans do all kinds of things that may harm themselves and that may directly or indirectly harm other people. For example, many Americans eat high amounts of candy, ice cream, potato chips, hamburgers, and other “fat food” that causes obesity, great harm to individual health, premature death and bereavement, and tens of billions of dollars in health costs and lost productivity annually. Although obesity almost certainly causes more harm overall than illegal drugs, no one is about to say that the use of “fat food” should be banned or restricted, although some schools and workplaces have removed candy and soda machines. Americans also engage in many other activities that can be very harmful, including downhill skiing, contact sports, skydiving, and any number of other activities, but no one is about to say that we should be prohibited from engaging in these efforts. Where is the logic, then, in allowing all these behaviors and in not allowing the use of certain drugs? A philosophical argument can be made that all drug use should, in fact, be allowed in a free society (Husak, 2002),Husak, D. (2002). *Legalize this! The case for decriminalizing drugs*. New York, NY: Verso Books. and perhaps this is an issue that you and your classmates will want to discuss.

The second consideration is the *social science* question of whether laws against drugs do more good than harm, or more harm than good. In a rational society, if a law or policy does more good than harm, then we should have the law or policy. However, if it does more harm than good, however much good it might do, then we should not have it, because the harm outweighs the good.

In considering this issue, critics of drug laws say they do much more harm than good, and they often cite Prohibition as an example of this dynamic. Prohibition was repealed because our society decided it was doing much more harm than good and was thus a "triumphant failure," as one author has called this period of our history (Okrent, 2011, p. 67).Okrent, D. (2011). *Last call: The rise and fall of prohibition*. New York, NY: Scribner. Prohibition caused several harms: (1) the rise of organized crime to earn illegal profits from the manufacture, distribution, and sale of alcohol; (2) the violence and murder among organized crime gangs that fought each other over drug "turf"; (3) the wounding and death of innocent bystanders from gunfights between organized crime gangs; (4) the wounding and murder of police officers who enforced Prohibition; (5) rampant corruption among police officers and political officials who took money from organized crime to ignore violations of Prohibition; and (6) the expenditure of much time, money, and energy by the criminal justice system to enforce Prohibition.

Prohibition did reduce drinking and the violence associated with drinking. But some scholars say that the organized crime violence caused by Prohibition was so common and deadly that the homicide rate grew during Prohibition rather than lessening (Jensen, 2000),Jensen, G. F. (2000). Prohibition, alcohol, and murder: Untangling counterveiling mechanisms. *Homicide Studies, 4*, 18–36. though other scholars dispute this finding (Owens, 2011).Owens, E. G. (2011, October 2). The (not so) roaring '20s. *New York Times*, p. SR12. In yet another problem, many people during Prohibition became sick and/or died from drinking tainted liquor. Because alcohol was no longer regulated, illegal alcohol often contained, by accident or design, dangerous substances. As an example, 15,000 people in the Midwest became sick with a severe neurological problem after drinking an illegal alcohol laced with a paint thinner chemical (Genzlinger, 2011).Genzlinger, N. (2011, October 1). Bellying up to the time when America went dry. *New York Times*, p. C1.

Critics of today's war on illegal drugs say that it has reproduced the same problems that Prohibition produced. Among these problems are the following:

- Drug gangs and individual drug sellers engage in deadly fights with each other and also kill or wound police officers and other law enforcement personnel who fight the war on drugs.
- Many innocent bystanders, including children, are wounded or killed by stray bullets.
- Many police officers take bribes to ignore drug law violations and/or sell drugs confiscated from dealers.
- The criminal justice system and other agencies spend much time, money, and energy in the war against illegal drugs, just as they did during Prohibition. Enforcing drug laws costs about $50 billion annually (McVay, n.d.).McVay, D. A. (n.d.). *Drug War Facts* (6th ed.). Retrieved from http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms. Police and other law enforcement personnel make more than 1.6 million arrests for drug offenses annually, including about 850,000 arrests for marijuana possession (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011).Federal Bureau of Investigation. (2011). *Crime in the United States, 2010*. Washington, DC: Author. Some 500,000 people are in prison or jail for drug offenses.
- The drug war has focused disproportionately on African Americans and Latinos and greatly increased their numbers who have gone to jail or prison. Even though illegal drug use is more common among whites than among blacks, the arrest rate for drug offenses is ten times higher for African Americans than the rate for whites (Blow, 2011).Blow, C. M. (2011, June 11). Drug bust. *New York Times*, p. A21. Partly because of the drug war, about one-third of young African American men have prison records.
- Most of the 17,000 annual deaths from illegal drug use stem from the fact that the drugs are illegal. Because they are illegal, they may contain dangerous substances that can be fatal, just as in Prohibition. In addition, some illegal drug users overdose because they underestimate the purity of a drug.





One of the harms associated with the war on drugs is that police officers die in the line of duty when they are killed by drug sellers or users.

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Because of all these problems, drug law critics say, the United States should legalize marijuana, the most benign illegal drug, and seriously consider legalizing some or all other illegal drugs.

Proponents of the drug war reply that if drugs were legalized or decriminalized (still against the law, but violations would be treated like traffic offenses), many more people would use the newly legal drugs, and the problems these drugs cause would increase. Responding to this argument, drug law critics say it is not at all certain that drug use would increase if drugs were legalized. To support their view, they cite two pieces of evidence.

First, illegal drugs are relatively easy to obtain and use without fear of arrest. If people have decided not to use illegal drugs now, it is unlikely they will use them if the drugs were legalized. Support for this argument comes from national data on high school seniors (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2011).Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2011). *Monitoring the future. National results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2010* Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research. In 2010, 82 percent of seniors said they could easily obtain marijuana, and 35.5 percent said they could easily obtain cocaine. Despite these numbers, only 35 percent had used marijuana in the past year, and only 3 percent had used cocaine in the past year.

Second, marijuana use in the United States decreased in the 1970s and 1980s after several states decriminalized it. As we noted earlier, marijuana use also declined in the Netherlands after they decriminalized the drug in the 1970s. Moreover, even though use of marijuana is legal in the Netherlands, its rate of marijuana use is no higher than the rate of marijuana use in the United States (Drug Policy Alliance, 2012).Drug Policy Alliance. (2012). Drug policy around the world: The Netherlands. Retrieved from http://www.drugpolicy.org/facts/drug-facts/marijuana-facts#medical. In another international comparison, Portugal decriminalized possession of all drugs in 2001; after it did so, teenage drug use declined (see Note 7.28 "Lessons from Other Societies").

At this point, it is impossible to know how much, if at all, the use of illegal drugs would rise if they were legalized. Critics of the drug war say that even if the use of drugs did rise, the benefits of legalizing or decriminalizing them would still outweigh the disadvantages (Feiling, 2010).

Lessons from Other Societies

What Happened after the Netherlands and Portugal Decriminalized Drugs?

As the United States ponders its drug policy, the experience of the Netherlands and Portugal provides some provocative lessons.

The Netherlands decriminalized drugs in 1976. Under the Netherlands' policy, although criminal penalties remain for possessing hard drugs (cocaine, heroin, etc.) and large quantities of marijuana, drug users are not normally arrested for possessing drugs, but they must receive drug treatment if they are arrested for another reason. Drug sellers are not normally arrested for selling small amounts of drugs, but they may be arrested for selling them in large. Marijuana use in the Netherlands dropped in the immediate years after it was decriminalized. Although it increased somewhat since then, as in some other nations, it remains much lower than the US rate. According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 23 percent of Dutch residents ages 15–64 have used cannabis at least once in their lives, compared to 40 percent of Americans ages 12 and older (2005 figures). Dutch use of cocaine and heroin also remains much lower than American use. Reflecting the Netherlands' experience, most of the nations in Western Europe have also decriminalized marijuana possession and use, and their rates of marijuana use also remain lower than the US rate.

In 2001, Portugal became the first European nation to remove all criminal penalties for drug possession. Portugal took this step because it reasoned that fear of arrest keeps drug addicts from seeking help and because it recognized that drug treatment costs far less than imprisonment. Anyone convicted of drug possession is sent for drug treatment, but the person may refuse treatment without any penalty.

In the first five years after Portugal decriminalized all drug possession, teenaged illegal drug use declined, new HIV infections from sharing needles declined, and the prison population also declined. Meanwhile, the number of drug addicts receiving treatment increased by 41 percent. A researcher who reported these trends commented, "Judging by every metric, decriminalization in Portugal has been a resounding success. It has enabled the Portuguese government to manage and control the drug problem far better than virtually every other Western country does." A Portuguese drug official agreed, "The impact [of drugs] in the life of families and our society is much lower than it was before decriminalization," and noted that police are now freer to spend more time and energy on high-level dealers. Adult drug use in Portugal has risen slightly since 2001, but so has adult drug use in other European nations that did not decriminalize drugs. Portugal's increase has not been higher than these other nations' increase.

Although the Netherlands, Portugal, and other Western European nations certainly differ from the United States in many ways, their experience strongly suggests that decriminalization of drugs may cause much more good than harm. If so, the United States has important lessons to learn from their experiences.

Sources: Hughes & Stevens, 2010; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008; Reinarman & Hendrien, 2004; Szaalavitz, 2009; Tracey & Jahromi, 2010Hughes, C. E., & Stevens, A. (2010). What can we learn from the Portuguese decriminalization of illicit drugs? *British Journal of Criminology, 50*(6), 999–1022; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2008). FAQ drugs: A guide to drug policy. Retrieved from http://www.minbuza.nl; Reinarman, C., Cohen, P. D. A., & Hendrien, K. L. (2004). The limited relevance of drug policy: Cannabis in Amsterdam and in San Francisco. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*, 836–842;

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- To deal with drugs, the United States has used several strategies, including treatment, prevention, harm reduction, and the legal war on illegal drugs.
- According to its critics, the war on illegal drugs has done much more harm than good and in this respect is repeating the example of Prohibition.

FOR YOUR REVIEW

1. Do you think the United States should make sterile needles and syringes freely available to people who are addicted to drugs that are injected? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree or disagree that the war on illegal drugs is doing more harm than good? Explain your answer.

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2.1.6: Addressing the Drug Problem and Reducing Drug Use

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the problems associated with arresting hundreds of thousands of people for drug possession.
2. List any three specific measures that may help deal with the drug problem.

As you may have already noticed and will notice again, the other chapters in this book usually present a fairly optimistic assessment when they discuss prospects for addressing the social problem discussed in each chapter. They point to the experience of other nations that do a good job of addressing the social problem, they cite social science evidence that points to solutions for addressing the problem, and they generally say that the United States could address the problem if it had the wisdom to approach it appropriately and to spend sufficient sums of money.

This chapter will not end with an optimistic assessment for addressing the drug problem. The reason for this lack of optimism is that what's past is prologue: People have enthusiastically used drugs since prehistoric times and show no signs of reducing their drug use. Many and perhaps most scholars think the legal war on drugs has had little, if any, impact on drug use (Walker, 2011), and many scholars recognize that this war brought with it the many disadvantages cited in the previous section. As Kleiman et al. (2011, p. xvi) observe, "Our current drug policies allow avoidable harm by their ineffectiveness and create needless suffering by their excesses."

A growing number of people in the political world agree. In 2011, the Global Commission on Drug Policy issued a major report on the world's antidrug efforts. The commission comprised nineteen members, including a former United Nations secretary general, a former US secretary of state, a former chair of the US Federal Reserve, and former presidents or prime ministers of Brazil, Colombia, Greece, Mexico, and Switzerland. The commission's report called for a drastic rethinking of current drug policy: "The global war on drugs has failed, with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world…Fundamental reforms in national and global drug control policies are urgently needed" (Global Commission on Drug Policy, 2011, p. 3). Decriminalization and even legalization of illegal drugs should be seriously considered, the report concluded.

Given this backdrop, many drug experts question whether our current drug policies make sense. They add that the best approach our society could take would be to expand the prevention, treatment, and harm reduction approaches discussed earlier; because drugs will always be with us, our society should do what it can to minimize the many harms that drugs cause. Thus drug education prevention and drug treatment programs should be expanded, sterile needles should be made available for drug addicts who inject their drugs, and drug courts should be used for a greater number of drug offenders.

Beyond these approaches, some experts say marijuana use should be decriminalized and that decriminalization of other drugs should be seriously considered. If marijuana were not only decriminalized but also legalized and taxed, it is estimated that this new tax revenue would amount to $8.7 billion annually and that about $8.7 billion annually would also be saved in reduced law enforcement costs, for a total of more than $17 billion in new funds that could be used for drug prevention, drug treatment, and other needs (Kristof, 2010). Many Americans agree with these experts: In a 2011 Gallup poll, 50 percent of the public favored legalizing marijuana, while 46 percent opposed legalizing it (Graves, 2011).

More generally, these experts say, it makes little sense to arrest more than 1.3 million people each year for drug possession and to put many of them in jail or prison. We do not arrest and imprison alcoholics and cigarette smokers; instead we try to offer them various kinds of help, and we should do the same for people who are addicted to other kinds of drugs. If arrest and imprisonment must continue, these measures should be reserved for sellers of large quantities of illegal drugs, not for the people who use the drugs or for those who sell only small quantities. When low-level drug dealers are imprisoned, they are simply replaced on the street by new dealers. Providing low-level dealers with alternative sentencing would reduce the number of imprisoned dealers over time by several hundred thousand annually without making illegal drugs more available.

In addition to all these measures, several other steps might well reduce certain kinds of drug use or at least reduce the harm that both drugs and our current drug policies cause (Kleiman et al., 2011). These steps include the following:

1. **Providing legally prescribed heroin and/or substitute opiates, including methadone, for heroin addicts.** This provision has proven effective in several other nations.
2. **Encouraging primary care physicians and other health-care providers to screen more carefully for substance abuse.**
3. **Basing drug sentencing less on the quantity of illegal drugs sold and more on the level of violence in which some drug sellers engage.**

4. **Abandoning DARE.** According to Kleiman et al. (2011, p. 201), "the continued dominance in school-based drug education of DARE—a program that has never been shown to actually reduce drug use—is a scandal." They instead recommend school-based programs that help children develop self-control and prosocial behavior, as these programs have also been shown to reduce children's subsequent drug use.
5. **Following the psychological principle of operant conditioning by providing drug addicts small cash payments for clean drug tests, as these rewards have been shown to be effective.**
6. **Fully reintegrating former drug dealers and recovering drug addicts into society.** They should have full access to public housing, educational loans, and other benefits, and they should be allowed to vote in states that now do not let them vote.
7. **Raising alcohol taxes.** According to Kleiman et al. (2011), tripling the alcohol tax would especially reduce drinking by heavy drinkers and by minors, and it would reduce the number of homicides by 1,000 annually and the number of motor vehicle accidents by 2,000 annually. The new tax money could also help fund alcohol treatment and prevention programs. "In the entire field of drug-abuse control," Kleiman et al. (2011, p. 204) write, "there is no bargain as attractive as a higher alcohol tax."
8. **Prohibiting alcohol sales to anyone who has engaged in drunk driving or who has committed violence under the influence of alcohol.** For this ban to work, everyone who wants to buy alcohol would have to show an ID, and those prohibited from buying alcohol would have that indicated on their ID. This ban would certainly be unpopular among the many drinkers who drink responsibly, but it would reduce the great harm that alcohol causes.
9. **Allowing marijuana users to grow their own cannabis or to buy it from small growers.** This would reduce the sales of cannabis, and thus its profits, from the organized crime groups and the Mexican cartels that now provide much of the marijuana used in the United States.
10. **Raising the cigarette tax.** Some states already have high cigarette taxes, but several states have low cigarette taxes. Raising the taxes in the low-tax states would reduce cigarette smoking in these states. The new tax revenue could be used to fund treatment programs that help reduce smoking.

Key Takeaways

- Critics of the war on drugs say that people who use illegal drugs should be treated, not arrested, just as people who use alcohol and tobacco are treated, if they seek treatment, rather than arrested.
- Specific measures that could help address the drug problem include providing legally prescribed heroin or substitute opiates for heroin addicts and raising the alcohol tax.

For Your Review

1. Do you think that alcohol taxes should be raised? Why or why not?
2. Do you favor decriminalization of marijuana? Explain your answer.

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2.1.7: End-of-Chapter Material

Summary

1. Humans have used drugs of various types since prehistoric times. Alcohol has been a common drug in the United States since the colonial period, and opium, marijuana, and heroin were common legal drugs in the late nineteenth century.
2. The distinction between legal and illegal drugs lacks a logical basis. Alcohol and tobacco kill many more people than all illegal drugs combined.
3. The use of several drugs is socially patterned. Males are more likely than females to use drugs, and religious people are less likely to use them than those who are less religious. The differences that race/ethnicity, education, and region of country make for drug use depends on the type of drug.
4. Biological theories assume that drug addiction results from a genetic predisposition, while psychological theories attribute drug use to certain personality traits and to positive reinforcement.
5. Sociological theories attribute drug use to peer and cultural influences. A sociological perspective suggests that the ultimate roots of drug use lie in the social environment rather than inside the individual.
6. Major approaches to dealing with drugs include treatment, prevention, harm reduction, and the use of the criminal justice system for illegal drugs. Critics of the war on drugs say that it does more harm than good, and they urge that serious consideration be given to decriminalizing marijuana and perhaps other drugs.

Using What You Know

A college friend of yours seems to drink a lot most nights and even goes to class some mornings hung over. You've become so concerned that you've suggested to your friend when you've been out for the evening to just have a couple drinks. Your friend has just laughed you off. What, if anything, do you do?

What You Can Do

To help deal with the societal and individual problems caused by alcohol and other drugs, you may wish to do any of the following:

1. Volunteer for a local agency that helps teenagers or adults who have a problem with alcohol or other drugs.
2. Start or join in efforts on your campus to encourage responsible drinking.
3. Start a group to encourage your state to raise taxes on alcohol and cigarettes.

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2.1.8: Case Study- Betty

WCC HLTH 285

Case Study Bio

Betty is a 60 year old Caucasian woman referred for substance use disorder assessment by her primary care doctor because he is concerned about seemingly increased mania and diabetes which is not well managed when she becomes manic. In periods of mania the doctor reported Betty binge drinks, does not eat and does not check her blood glucose levels. She was recently hospitalized with a blood sugar of 782 and was almost unconscious. When she started to feel better and stabilize, she attempted to leave the hospital AMA (against medical advice) so the unit physician contacted the county designated mental health team to evaluate Betty for detainment, enacting the Involuntary Treatment Act. Evaluators did commit Betty for 72 hours but upon release from the hospital she was placed on a Least Restrictive Mental Health Court Order which expires in 90 days.

Betty is an only child born to married parents who have both recently passed. Betty was recently separated from her husband of 34 years, but not legally; they are living apart “only to give me time to get squared away again”. When asked why she has come for an assessment, Betty explained, “My recent hospitalization due to the diabetes and the doctor is worried about my drinking, apparently. When asked if she thinks she may have a problem with drinking or other substances, she replied, “I don’t think it is my drinking but really it is the Bipolar that is the problem. I just haven’t found the right doctor to treat me for that yet.” She went on to expand quite extensively about her medical history and many of her accomplishments in her life which she described as having come to “a screaming halt” when she gave birth to a stillborn daughter 15 years ago. She had tried to get pregnant for years and finally did only to lose the baby. She stated she was unable to have any more children due to her age. At this point during assessment Betty said she couldn’t continue with the assessment and asked if she could leave. This writer reminded her she is required by her LR court order to complete the assessment. She was offered a short break prior to continuing the assessment. Betty appeared very agitated during the assessment and often talked over this writer and interrupted. She presented somewhat manic although she stated, “I am better than I was before going into the hospital.”

Betty reported she was hospitalized once as a teen and once as a young adult. She admitted to attempting suicide on only two occasions. When asked how she tried to suicide, she reported she overdosed on her mother’s pain pills when she was a teen but as an adult she tried cutting her wrists. She reported she still sometimes thinks about suicide, especially around April 14th, because that is when her baby girl was born. Betty became very emotional when talking about her stillborn daughter. According to Betty, her daughter was a full term, healthy baby but in the last 30 minutes of delivery, the baby stressed and the cord was wrapped around her neck and she was not yet turned face down. She stated when the doctor tried to turn the baby manually, she further stressed and that is when the heartbeat stopped. She gave birth to her daughter but she could not be revived.

Betty graduated from Friday Harbor High School and went on to a four year college, Washington State University. She was studying nursing but was a year shy of her bachelor’s degree when she had to quit. When asked why, she reported she just had some personal problems and she did something “stupid and ended up in the hospital”. When asked what, Betty said she had a minor car accident. This writer then called Betty’s attention to the discharge paperwork from the hospital and mentioned it has most of her history in the document. This writer asked again, if it may have been when she tried to hurt herself. Betty then became quite defensive and agitated and yelled, “that’s none of your business and it has nothing to do with why I am here. “ This writer reassured Betty the information is very confidential and it is important to have all the information about her history in order to be of the most help possible. Betty calmed down and then said she was hospitalized because she slit her forearms open and was found unconscious. Betty stated the man she loved and wanted to marry cheated on her and she caught him.

Betty reported that she enjoys dancing and listening to music, sometimes swims at the local gym, and used to love hiking and bicycling, although she has not done these activities in a long time.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Research

3.1: Science and Scientific Research

3.1.1: Science

3.1.2: Scientific Knowledge

3.1.3: Scientific Research

3.1.4: Scientific Method

3.1.5: Types of Scientific Research

3.1.6: History of Scientific Thought

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SECTION OVERVIEW

3.1: Science and Scientific Research

What is research? Depending on who you ask, you will likely get very different answers to this seemingly innocuous question. Some people will say that they routinely research different online websites to find the best place to buy goods or services they want. Television news channels supposedly conduct research in the form of viewer polls on topics of public interest such as forthcoming elections or government-funded projects. Undergraduate students research the Internet to find the information they need to complete assigned projects or term papers. Graduate students working on research projects for a professor may see research as collecting or analyzing data related to their project. Businesses and consultants research different potential solutions to remedy organizational problems such as a supply chain bottleneck or to identify customer purchase patterns. However, none of the above can be considered “scientific research” unless: (1) it contributes to a body of science, and (2) it follows the scientific method. This chapter will examine what these terms mean.

3.1.1: Science

3.1.2: Scientific Knowledge

3.1.3: Scientific Research

3.1.4: Scientific Method

3.1.5: Types of Scientific Research

3.1.6: History of Scientific Thought

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3.1.1: Science

What is science? To some, science refers to difficult high school or college-level courses such as physics, chemistry, and biology meant only for the brightest students. To others, science is a craft practiced by scientists in white coats using specialized equipment in their laboratories. Etymologically, the word "science" is derived from the Latin word scientia meaning knowledge. **Science** refers to a systematic and organized body of knowledge in any area of inquiry that is acquired using "the scientific method" (the scientific method is described further below). Science can be grouped into two broad categories: natural science and social science. **Natural science** is the science of naturally occurring objects or phenomena, such as light, objects, matter, earth, celestial bodies, or the human body. Natural sciences can be further classified into physical sciences, earth sciences, life sciences, and others. Physical sciences consist of disciplines such as physics (the science of physical objects), chemistry (the science of matter), and astronomy (the science of celestial objects). Earth sciences consist of disciplines such as geology (the science of the earth). Life sciences include disciplines such as biology (the science of human bodies) and botany (the science of plants). In contrast, **social science** is the science of people or collections of people, such as groups, firms, societies, or economies, and their individual or collective behaviors. Social sciences can be classified into disciplines such as psychology (the science of human behaviors), sociology (the science of social groups), and economics (the science of firms, markets, and economies).

The natural sciences are different from the social sciences in several respects. The natural sciences are very precise, accurate, deterministic, and independent of the person making the scientific observations. For instance, a scientific experiment in physics, such as measuring the speed of sound through a certain media or the refractive index of water, should always yield the exact same results, irrespective of the time or place of the experiment, or the person conducting the experiment. If two students conducting the same physics experiment obtain two different values of these physical properties, then it generally means that one or both of those students must be in error. However, the same cannot be said for the social sciences, which tend to be less accurate, deterministic, or unambiguous. For instance, if you measure a person's happiness using a hypothetical instrument, you may find that the same person is more happy or less happy (or sad) on different days and sometimes, at different times on the same day. One's happiness may vary depending on the news that person received that day or on the events that transpired earlier during that day. Furthermore, there is not a single instrument or metric that can accurately measure a person's happiness. Hence, one instrument may calibrate a person as being "more happy" while a second instrument may find that the same person is "less happy" at the same instant in time. In other words, there is a high degree of *measurement error* in the social sciences and there is considerable uncertainty and little agreement on social science policy decisions. For instance, you will not find many disagreements among natural scientists on the speed of light or the speed of the earth around the sun, but you will find numerous disagreements among social scientists on how to solve a social problem such as reduce global terrorism or rescue an economy from a recession. Any student studying the social sciences must be cognizant of and comfortable with handling higher levels of ambiguity, uncertainty, and error that come with such sciences, which merely reflects the high variability of social objects.

Sciences can also be classified based on their purpose. **Basic sciences**, also called pure sciences, are those that explain the most basic objects and forces, relationships between them, and laws governing them. Examples include physics, mathematics, and biology. **Applied sciences**, also called practical sciences, are sciences that apply scientific knowledge from basic sciences in a physical environment. For instance, engineering is an applied science that applies the laws of physics and chemistry for practical applications such as building stronger bridges or fuel efficient combustion engines, while medicine is an applied science that applies the laws of biology for solving human ailments. Both basic and applied sciences are required for human development. However, applied sciences cannot stand on their own right, but instead relies on basic sciences for its progress. Of course, the industry and private enterprises tend to focus more on applied sciences given their practical value, while universities study both basic and applied sciences.

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3.1.2: Scientific Knowledge

The purpose of science is to create scientific knowledge. **Scientific knowledge** refers to a generalized body of laws and theories to explain a phenomenon or behavior of interest that are acquired using the scientific method. **Laws** are observed patterns of phenomena or behaviors, while **theories** are systematic explanations of the underlying phenomenon or behavior. For instance, in physics, the Newtonian Laws of Motion describe what happens when an object is in a state of rest or motion (Newton's First Law), what force is needed to move a stationary object or stop a moving object (Newton's Second Law), and what happens when two objects collide (Newton's Third Law). Collectively, the three laws constitute the basis of classical mechanics – a theory of moving objects. Likewise, the theory of optics explains the properties of light and how it behaves in different media, electromagnetic theory explains the properties of electricity and how to generate it, quantum mechanics explains the properties of subatomic particles, and thermodynamics explains the properties of energy and mechanical work. An introductory college level text book in physics will likely contain separate chapters devoted to each of these theories. Similar theories are also available in social sciences. For instance, cognitive dissonance theory in psychology explains how people react when their observations of an event is different from what they expected of that event, general deterrence theory explains why some people engage in improper or criminal behaviors, such as illegally download music or commit software piracy, and the theory of planned behavior explains how people make conscious reasoned choices in their everyday lives.

The goal of scientific research is to discover laws and postulate theories that can explain natural or social phenomena, or in other words, build scientific knowledge. It is important to understand that this knowledge may be imperfect or even quite far from the truth. Sometimes, there may not be a single universal truth, but rather an equilibrium of "multiple truths." We must understand that the theories, upon which scientific knowledge is based, are only explanations of a particular phenomenon, as suggested by a scientist. As such, there may be good or poor explanations, depending on the extent to which those explanations fit well with reality, and consequently, there may be good or poor theories. The progress of science is marked by our progression over time from poorer theories to better theories, through better observations using more accurate instruments and more informed logical reasoning.

We arrive at scientific laws or theories through a process of logic and evidence. Logic (theory) and evidence (observations) are the two, and only two, pillars upon which scientific knowledge is based. In science, theories and observations are interrelated and cannot exist without each other. Theories provide meaning and significance to what we observe, and observations help validate or refine existing theory or construct new theory. Any other means of knowledge acquisition, such as faith or authority cannot be considered science.

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3.1.3: Scientific Research

Given that theories and observations are the two pillars of science, scientific research operates at two levels: a theoretical level and an empirical level. The theoretical level is concerned with developing abstract concepts about a natural or social phenomenon and relationships between those concepts (i.e., build "theories"), while the empirical level is concerned with testing the theoretical concepts and relationships to see how well they reflect our observations of reality, with the goal of ultimately building better theories. Over time, a theory becomes more and more refined (i.e., fits the observed reality better), and the science gains maturity. Scientific research involves continually moving back and forth between theory and observations. Both theory and observations are essential components of scientific research. For instance, relying solely on observations for making inferences and ignoring theory is not considered valid scientific research.

Depending on a researcher's training and interest, scientific inquiry may take one of two possible forms: inductive or deductive. In **inductive research**, the goal of a researcher is to infer theoretical concepts and patterns from observed data. In **deductive research**, the goal of the researcher is to test concepts and patterns known from theory using new empirical data. Hence, inductive research is also called *theory-building* research, and deductive research is *theory-testing* research. Note here that the goal of theory-testing is not just to test a theory, but possibly to refine, improve, and extend it. Figure 1.1 depicts the complementary nature of inductive and deductive research. Note that inductive and deductive research are two halves of the research cycle that constantly iterates between theory and observations. You cannot do inductive or deductive research if you are not familiar with both the theory and data components of research. Naturally, a complete researcher is one who can traverse the entire research cycle and can handle both inductive and deductive research.

It is important to understand that theory-building (inductive research) and theorytesting (deductive research) are both critical for the advancement of science. Elegant theories are not valuable if they do not match with reality. Likewise, mountains of data are also useless until they can contribute to the construction to meaningful theories. Rather than viewing these two processes in a circular relationship, as shown in Figure 1.1, perhaps they can be better viewed as a helix, with each iteration between theory and data contributing to better explanations of the phenomenon of interest and better theories. Though both inductive and deductive research are important for the advancement of science, it appears that inductive (theory-building) research is more valuable when there are few prior theories or explanations, while deductive (theory-testing) research is more productive when there are many competing theories of the same phenomenon and researchers are interested in knowing which theory works best and under what circumstances.

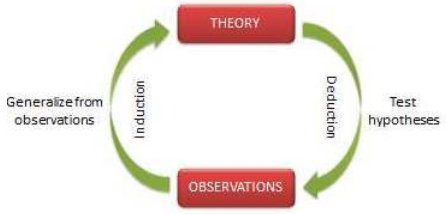


Figure 1.1. The Cycle of Research

Theory building and theory testing are particularly difficult in the social sciences, given the imprecise nature of the theoretical concepts, inadequate tools to measure them, and the presence of many unaccounted factors that can also influence the phenomenon of interest. It is also very difficult to refute theories that do not work. For instance, Karl Marx's theory of communism as an effective means of economic production withstood for decades, before it was finally discredited as being inferior to capitalism in promoting economic growth and social welfare. Erstwhile communist economies like the Soviet Union and China eventually moved toward more capitalistic economies characterized by profit-maximizing private enterprises. However, the recent collapse of the mortgage and financial industries in the United States demonstrates that capitalism also has its flaws and is not as effective in fostering economic growth and social welfare as previously presumed. Unlike theories in the natural sciences, social science theories are rarely perfect, which provides numerous opportunities for researchers to improve those theories or build their own alternative theories.

Conducting scientific research, therefore, requires two sets of skills – theoretical and methodological – needed to operate in the theoretical and empirical levels respectively. Methodological skills ("know-how") are relatively standard, invariant across disciplines, and easily acquired through doctoral programs. However, theoretical skills ("know-what") is considerably harder to master, requires years of observation and reflection, and are tacit skills that cannot be "taught" but rather learned though

experience. All of the greatest scientists in the history of mankind, such as Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Neils Bohr, Adam Smith, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Simon, were master theoreticians, and they are remembered for the theories they postulated that transformed the course of science. Methodological skills are needed to be an ordinary researcher, but theoretical skills are needed to be an extraordinary researcher!

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3.1.4: Scientific Method

In the preceding sections, we described science as knowledge acquired through a scientific method. So what exactly is the "scientific method"? **Scientific method** refers to a standardized set of techniques for building scientific knowledge, such as how to make valid observations, how to interpret results, and how to generalize those results. The scientific method allows researchers to independently and impartially test preexisting theories and prior findings, and subject them to open debate, modifications, or enhancements. The scientific method must satisfy four key characteristics:

- *Logical*: Scientific inferences must be based on logical principles of reasoning.
- *Confirmable*: Inferences derived must match with observed evidence.
- *Repeatable*: Other scientists should be able to independently replicate or repeat a scientific study and obtain similar, if not identical, results.
- *Scrutinizable*: The procedures used and the inferences derived must withstand critical scrutiny (peer review) by other scientists.

Any branch of inquiry that does not allow the scientific method to test its basic laws or theories cannot be called "science." For instance, theology (the study of religion) is not science because theological ideas (such as the presence of God) cannot be tested by independent observers using a logical, confirmable, repeatable, and scrutinizable. Similarly, arts, music, literature, humanities, and law are also not considered science, even though they are creative and worthwhile endeavors in their own right.

The scientific method, as applied to social sciences, includes a variety of research approaches, tools, and techniques, for collecting and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data. These methods include laboratory experiments, field surveys, case research, ethnographic research, action research, and so forth. Much of this book is devoted to learning about these different methods. However, recognize that the scientific method operates primarily at the empirical level of research, i.e., how to make observations and analyze these observations. Very little of this method is directly pertinent to the theoretical level, which is really the more challenging part of scientific research.

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3.1.5: Types of Scientific Research

Depending on the purpose of research, scientific research projects can be grouped into three types: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. **Exploratory research** is often conducted in new areas of inquiry, where the goals of the research are: (1) to scope out the magnitude or extent of a particular phenomenon, problem, or behavior, (2) to generate some initial ideas (or "hunches") about that phenomenon, or (3) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study regarding that phenomenon. For instance, if the citizens of a country are generally dissatisfied with governmental policies regarding during an economic recession, exploratory research may be directed at measuring the extent of citizens' dissatisfaction, understanding how such dissatisfaction is manifested, such as the frequency of public protests, and the presumed causes of such dissatisfaction, such as ineffective government policies in dealing with inflation, interest rates, unemployment, or higher taxes. Such research may include examination of publicly reported figures, such as estimates of economic indicators, such as gross domestic product (GDP), unemployment, and consumer price index, as archived by third-party sources, obtained through interviews of experts, eminent economists, or key government officials, and/or derived from studying historical examples of dealing with similar problems. This research may not lead to a very accurate understanding of the target problem, but may be worthwhile in scoping out the nature and extent of the problem and serve as a useful precursor to more in-depth research.

Descriptive research is directed at making careful observations and detailed documentation of a phenomenon of interest. These observations must be based on the scientific method (i.e., must be replicable, precise, etc.), and therefore, are more reliable than casual observations by untrained people. Examples of descriptive research are tabulation of demographic statistics by the United States Census Bureau or employment statistics by the Bureau of Labor, who use the same or similar instruments for estimating employment by sector or population growth by ethnicity over multiple employment surveys or censuses. If any changes are made to the measuring instruments, estimates are provided with and without the changed instrumentation to allow the readers to make a fair before-and-after comparison regarding population or employment trends. Other descriptive research may include chronicling ethnographic reports of gang activities among adolescent youth in urban populations, the persistence or evolution of religious, cultural, or ethnic practices in select communities, and the role of technologies such as Twitter and instant messaging in the spread of democracy movements in Middle Eastern countries.

Explanatory research seeks explanations of observed phenomena, problems, or behaviors. While descriptive research examines the what, where, and when of a phenomenon, explanatory research seeks answers to why and how types of questions. It attempts to "connect the dots" in research, by identifying causal factors and outcomes of the target phenomenon. Examples include understanding the reasons behind adolescent crime or gang violence, with the goal of prescribing strategies to overcome such societal ailments. Most academic or doctoral research belongs to the explanation category, though some amount of exploratory and/or descriptive research may also be needed during initial phases of academic research. Seeking explanations for observed events requires strong theoretical and interpretation skills, along with intuition, insights, and personal experience. Those who can do it well are also the most prized scientists in their disciplines.

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3.1.6: History of Scientific Thought

Before closing this chapter, it may be interesting to go back in history and see how science has evolved over time and identify the key scientific minds in this evolution. Although instances of scientific progress have been documented over many centuries, the terms "science," "scientists," and the "scientific method" were coined only in the 19th century. Prior to this time, science was viewed as a part of philosophy, and coexisted with other branches of philosophy such as logic, metaphysics, ethics, and aesthetics, although the boundaries between some of these branches were blurred.

In the earliest days of human inquiry, knowledge was usually recognized in terms of theological precepts based on faith. This was challenged by Greek philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates during the 3rd century BC, who suggested that the fundamental nature of being and the world can be understood more accurately through a process of systematic logical reasoning called **rationalism**. In particular, Aristotle's classic work *Metaphysics* (literally meaning "beyond physical [existence]") separated *theology* (the study of Gods) from *ontology* (the study of being and existence) and *universal science* (the study of first principles, upon which logic is based). Rationalism (not to be confused with "rationality") views reason as the source of knowledge or justification, and suggests that the criterion of truth is not sensory but rather intellectual and deductive, often derived from a set of first principles or axioms (such as Aristotle's "law of non-contradiction").

The next major shift in scientific thought occurred during the 16th century, when British philosopher Francis Bacon (1561-1626) suggested that knowledge can only be derived from observations in the real world. Based on this premise, Bacon emphasized knowledge acquisition as an empirical activity (rather than as a reasoning activity), and developed **empiricism** as an influential branch of philosophy. Bacon's works led to the popularization of inductive methods of scientific inquiry, the development of the "scientific method" (originally called the "Baconian method"), consisting of systematic observation, measurement, and experimentation, and may have even sowed the seeds of atheism or the rejection of theological precepts as "unobservable."

Empiricism continued to clash with rationalism throughout the Middle Ages, as philosophers sought the most effective way of gaining valid knowledge. French philosopher Rene Descartes sided with the rationalists, while British philosophers John Locke and David Hume sided with the empiricists. Other scientists, such as Galileo Galilei and Sir Issac Newton, attempted to fuse the two ideas into **natural philosophy** (the philosophy of nature), to focus specifically on understanding nature and the physical universe, which is considered to be the precursor of the natural sciences. Galileo (1564-1642) was perhaps the first to state that the laws of nature are mathematical, and contributed to the field of astronomy through an innovative combination of experimentation and mathematics.

In the 18th century, German philosopher Immanuel Kant sought to resolve the dispute between empiricism and rationalism in his book *Critique of Pure Reason*, by arguing that experience is purely subjective and processing them using pure reason without first delving into the subjective nature of experiences will lead to theoretical illusions. Kant's ideas led to the development of **German idealism**, which inspired later development of interpretive techniques such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and critical social theory.

At about the same time, French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857), founder of the discipline of sociology, attempted to blend rationalism and empiricism in a new doctrine called **positivism**. He suggested that theory and observations have circular dependence on each other. While theories may be created via reasoning, they are only authentic if they can be verified through observations. The emphasis on verification started the separation of modern science from philosophy and metaphysics and further development of the "scientific method" as the primary means of validating scientific claims. Comte's ideas were expanded by Emile Durkheim in his development of sociological positivism (positivism as a foundation for social research) and Ludwig Wittgenstein in logical positivism.

In the early 20th century, strong accounts of positivism were rejected by interpretive sociologists (antipositivists) belonging to the German idealism school of thought. Positivism was typically equated with quantitative research methods such as experiments and surveys and without any explicit philosophical commitments, while **antipositivism** employed qualitative methods such as unstructured interviews and participant observation. Even practitioners of positivism, such as American sociologist Paul Lazarsfield who pioneered large-scale survey research and statistical techniques for analyzing survey data, acknowledged potential problems of observer bias and structural limitations in positivist inquiry. In response, antipositivists emphasized that social actions must be studied though interpretive means based upon an understanding the meaning and purpose that individuals attach to their personal actions, which inspired Georg Simmel's work on symbolic interactionism, Max Weber's work on ideal types, and Edmund Husserl's work on phenomenology.

In the mid-to-late 20th century, both positivist and antipositivist schools of thought were subjected to criticisms and modifications. British philosopher Sir Karl Popper suggested that human knowledge is based not on unchallengeable, rock solid foundations, but rather on a set of tentative conjectures that can never be proven conclusively, but only disproven. Empirical evidence is the basis for disproving these conjectures or "theories." This metatheoretical stance, called **postpositivism** (or postempiricism), amends positivism by suggesting that it is impossible to verify the truth although it is possible to reject false beliefs, though it retains the positivist notion of an objective truth and its emphasis on the scientific method.

Likewise, antipositivists have also been criticized for trying only to understand society but not critiquing and changing society for the better. The roots of this thought lie in *Das Capital*, written by German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which critiqued capitalistic societies as being social inequitable and inefficient, and recommended resolving this inequity through class conflict and proletarian revolutions. Marxism inspired social revolutions in countries such as Germany, Italy, Russia, and China, but generally failed to accomplish the social equality that it aspired. **Critical research** (also called critical theory) propounded by Max Horkheimer and Jurgen Habermas in the 20th century, retains similar ideas of critiquing and resolving social inequality, and adds that people can and should consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances, although their ability to do so is constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination. Critical research attempts to uncover and critique the restrictive and alienating conditions of the status quo by analyzing the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society, and seeks to eliminate the causes of alienation and domination (i.e., emancipate the oppressed class). More on these different research philosophies and approaches will be covered in future chapters of this book.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Culture

- 4.1: What is Culture?
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SECTION OVERVIEW

4.1: What is Culture?

Learning Objectives

- Define culture and identify its defining characteristics.
- Define enculturation and its relationship to culture.
- Define and identify examples of cultural relativism and ethnocentrism.
- Explain and identify examples of the mechanisms of cultural change.
- Explain how culture is an adaptive mechanism.

4.1.1: What is Culture?

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4.1.3: Culture As An Adaptive Mechanism

4.1.4: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

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4.1.8: End of Chapter Discussion

Thumbnail: Maori warriors perform a Haka, meaning dance of welcome, for Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta during a Powhiri ceremony while visiting Auckland, New Zealand Sept. 21, 2012. The ceremony is an ancient Maori tradition used to determine if visitors came in peace or with hostile intent. (Publc Domain; Erin A. Kirk-Cuomo).

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4.1.1: What is Culture?

Culture is a concept that often invokes thoughts of a Monet, a Mozart symphony, or ballerinas in tutus dancing in a production of Swan Lake. In popular vernacular, culture often refers to the arts; a person that is cultured has knowledge of and is a patron of the arts. Then there is pop culture such as what trends are current and hip. Within anthropology, these things are simply aspects of culture. To understand the anthropological concept of culture, we need to think broader and holistically.

Anthropologists have long debated an appropriate definition of culture. Even today some anthropologists criticize the culture concept as oversimplifying and stereotyping cultures, which will be discussed more below. The first anthropological definition of culture comes from 19th-century British anthropologist Edward Tylor:

> *Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor 1920 [1871], 1).*

It is probably the most enduring definition of culture even though it relates more to the specifics, or particulars, of cultural groups. As Bohannan and Glazer (1988) comment in High Points in Anthropology, "...[it is the definition] most anthropologists can quote correctly, and the one they fall back on when others prove too cumbersome" (62). Tylor, echoing the French idea of civilization progressing from a barbaric state to “science, secularism, and rational thought” (Beldo 2010), believed that all human culture passed through stages of development with the pinnacle being that of 19th-century England. He believed, as many others of his time period did, that all other cultures were inherently inferior. Franz Boas, a German American anthropologist, challenged Tylor’s approach. He drew on the German concept of *kultur*, local and personal behaviors and traditions, to develop his ideas about culture. Boas thought that cultures did not follow a linear progression as espoused by cultural evolutionists like Tylor, but developed in different directions based on historical events. Boas took years to develop a working definition of culture, but it is one that influences anthropologists to this day. Culture is an integrated system of symbols, ideas and values that should be studied as a working system and an organic whole (Kuper 1999).



Figure 4.1.1.1: Tamil Culture, 2010, montage by Mithun Chuckraverthy under CC BY-SA 3.0.

One way to think about culture is to break down the concept into two distinct categories: the *Big C* and the *little c*. The Big C is an overarching general concept that can be applied to all culture groups; it is the anthropological concept. The little c is the particulars of a specific cultural group, such as American culture. Over time, anthropologists learned that including specifics when attempting to define culture (the big C) limited that definition. In other words, the definition would not apply to all cultures. Anthropologists began to develop a definition that could be applied more broadly.

“Culture” vs. “culture”

Culture (the little c), as mentioned above, is the particulars of any given cultural group. For instance, the marriage or subsistence pattern of a group of people. Specific traditions and rituals that many people associate with a cultural, would fall into the little c. A good portion of this book is devoted to examining the various manifestations of social institutions, or some of a cultural group's particulars. This chapter focuses on the Big C, culture as an overarching anthropological concept. Since there are so many definitions for culture, this text will use the broad definition proposed by Lara Braff and Katie Nelson (2020); **culture** is "a set of

beliefs, **practices**, and symbols that are learned and shared. Together, they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that binds people together and shapes their worldview and lifeways" (6).

Definition: culture

A set of beliefs, practices, and symbols that are learned and shared. Together, they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that binds people together and shapes their worldview and lifeways.

Definition: beliefs

All the mental aspects of culture including values, norms, philosophies, worldviews, knowledge, and so forth.

Definition: practices

Behaviors and actions that may be motivated by belief or performed without reflection as part of everyday routines.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

Although there are many definitions of culture, there are common themes that run through them all. Namely, culture is learned, shared, symbolic, holistic, dynamic, integrated, and adaptive. Each of these characteristics is expanded upon below and will we will take a closer look at some of them in later sections and chapters of this book.

Culture is learned.

While we are not born with a particular culture, we are born with the capacity to learn any culture. Through the process of *enculturation*, we learn to become members of our group both directly, through instruction from our parents and peers, and indirectly by observing and imitating those around us.

Culture is shared.

To say that a group of people *shares* a culture does not mean all individuals think or act in identical ways. One's beliefs and practices can vary within a culture depending on age, gender, social status, and other characteristics.

Culture is symbolic.

Much like art and language, culture is also symbolic. A **symbol** is something, verbal or non-verbal, that stands for something else, often without an obvious or natural connection. Individuals create, interpret, and share the meanings of symbols within their group or the larger society. For example, in U.S. society everyone recognizes a red octagonal sign as signifying "stop." In other cases, groups within American society interpret the same symbol in different ways. For example, take the Confederate flag. Some people see it as a symbol of pride in a southern heritage. Many others see it as a symbol of the long legacy of slavery, segregation, and racial oppression. Thus, displaying the Confederate flag could have positive or, more often, negative connotations. Cultural symbols powerfully convey either shared or conflicting meanings across space and time.

Definition: symbol

Something, verbal or non-verbal, that stands for something else, often without an obvious or natural connection.

Culture is holistic.

Culture is all-encompassing. It is a blueprint for living and tells us how to respond in any given situation. Culture includes social and political organizations and institutions, legal and economic systems, family groups, descent, religion, and language. However, it also includes all aspects of our everyday lives such as the clothing we wear, what we eat, what we watch on television, and what music we listen to.

Culture is dynamic.

Culture is dynamic and constantly changes in response to both internal and external factors. Some parts of culture change more quickly than others. For instance, in dominant American culture, technology changes rapidly while deep-seated values such as individualism, freedom, and self-determination change very little over time.

Culture is integrated.

Inevitably, when one part of culture changes, so do other parts. This is because nearly all parts of a culture are integrated and interrelated. As powerful as culture is, humans are not necessarily bound by culture; they have the capacity to conform to it or transform it.

Culture is adaptive.

While culture is central to making us human, we are still biological beings with natural needs and urges that we share with other animals: hunger, thirst, sex, elimination, etc. Human culture is our adaptive mechanism that uniquely channels these urges in particular ways. As a result, cultural practices can then impact our biology, growth, and development. Humans are one of the most dynamic species on Earth. Our ability to change both culturally and biologically has enabled us to persist for millions of years and to thrive in diverse environments.

These characteristics of culture allow us to understand that people everywhere are thinkers and actors shaped by their social contexts. As you will see throughout this book, these contexts are incredibly diverse.

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4.1.2: The Capacity for Culture

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

One aspect of life that humans and animals have in common is that we live in organized groups, or a **society.** But do we share culture? Once upon a time, social scientists regarded humans as the only species to exhibit culture. But if language and tool use are both evidence of culture, we must acknowledge that other species may also possess some rudiments of culture. Whales and dolphins, for instance, may have some capacity for language. And chimpanzees have been observed making tools, "fishing rods" so to speak, for retrieving termites from their nests. Bottle-nosed dolphins also appear to be tool-users. They have been observed to break off pieces of sea sponge and use them in order to probe for fish along the sea bottom. Ethologists have even observed that some species of songbirds, and some species of fish too, exhibit "socially learned cultural traditions" (Mesoudi 2011).

Definition: society

Organized life in groups.

While there is evidence that non-human primates and other species do learn and share some type of culture, no other species demonstrates the cultural virtuosity of human beings. For one thing, the cultures of non-human species do not seem to show the same tendencies of development and innovation from one generation to the next, as human culture does. For example, the combining of two or more separate elements into entirely new tools or practices does not seem to occur among non-humans, whereas it is a hallmark of human cultural development.

Enculturation

Tylor's definition of culture included shared beliefs, art, law, morals, custom, capabilities, and habits. Boas and his students added to this definition by emphasizing the importance of **enculturation**, the process of learning culture, in the lives of individuals. Benedict, Mead, and others established that, through the process of enculturation, culture shapes individual identity, self-awareness, and emotions in fundamental ways. Although parents and other authority figures in a young child's life are usually the initiators of this process, people in the community also play a part in steering children toward activities and beliefs that will be socially accepted in their culture. Through this process, the individuals in the child's life shape their worldview. Clifford Geertz (1973) proposed that a society's culture is a "set of control mechanisms--plans, recipes, rules, instructions what computer engineers call programs, for governing behaviors" (44). It is through conscious and unconscious learning, interaction, and observation that individuals acquire the rules of the culture they live in.

Definition: enculturation

The process of learning culture.

It is important to understand the role that enculturation plays in maintaining the beliefs and practices of a culture as well as the role it plays in our individual thought patterns. Enculturation affects how we view other cultures and their practices, which can lead to *ethnocentrism* (discussed later in this chapter). For example, in the United States, we are taught to eat with forks, knives, and spoons; however, in some cultures, especially in the Middle East and Asia, eating with your hands from a common dish is perfectly acceptable...and expected. Likewise, some countries drive on the left side of the road, while others, like the United States, drive on the right side. Often, we may hear the comment, "They drive on the wrong side of the road!". Obviously, there is no right or wrong side of the road just as there is no right or wrong way to eat food. However, there are other cultural rules that one must learn for each practice.



Figure 4.1.2.1: Eating Etiquette
Image 1: Qurutob: eating the traditional way with one's hands, 2007, by Zlerman under CC BY-SA 3.0.
Image 2: Corona, Long Island, New York Family Eating Supper, 1943, by Marjory Collins under Public Domain.

Shared Culture

Humans share both material and non-material culture. Material culture consists of tangible objects that people create: tools, toys, buildings, furniture, images, and even print and digital media—a seemingly endless list of items. As discussed in chapter 1, archeologists study the material culture from societies as remote in time as the Upper Paleolithic (and earlier) which tells us a lot about their activities. In fact, material culture is almost all we have to inform us about human culture in the deep past before the existence of written records. While material culture provides clues about the lives of the people who create and use it, artifacts alone are silent about many other details of past cultures, for much of human culture is non-material.

Non-material culture includes such things as: beliefs, practices, customs, traditions, and rituals, to give just a few examples. As discussed earlier in this chapter, beliefs are the mental aspects of a culture that includes norms and values. While some beliefs may be universally shared across most cultures, culturally shared beliefs tend to have boundaries. The members of one group may consider their own, shared cultural beliefs as self-evidently true, while members of other groups might consider the same beliefs as questionable, if not strange and arbitrary. Culturally relevant beliefs govern every conceivable aspect of social life: religious, political, economic, and domestic to mention only a few.

Norms

Norms are the expectations or rules, formal or informal, about what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior in a particular society. Generally, norms are separated into two types: folkways and mores. **Folkways** are a loose collection of usual or customary ways in which the members of a particular cultural community behave. Examples include: how people greet one another, how they dress, what they eat, how they prepare it, and how they eat it, how they handle interpersonal conflict, etc. **Mores** (pronounced “more-rays”) are stricter than folkways. They are the standards of moral conduct and ethical behavior that the people in a cultural community expect of one another. They include such things as rules against killing, rules about who can or cannot have sex with whom, and so on.

Definition: norms

The expectations or rules, formal or informal, about what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior in a particular society.

Definition: folkways

A loose collection of usual or customary ways in which the members of a particular cultural community behave.

Definition: mores

The standards of moral conduct and ethical behavior that the people in a cultural community expect of one another; what a community considers morally or ethically right or wrong.

The mores of a society are enforced in various ways. The most important mores are upheld by means of **laws**, which are explicitly stated rules that are enforced. People who violate laws may have to pay a penalty, for example, going to jail, or paying a monetary fine. Other mores may not be strictly against the law but are nevertheless strongly endorsed by a society. Such mores may be

upheld mainly by means of **social sanctions**, which are ways of communicating disapproval or putting pressure on people who violate a community's mores. For example, people who violate mores for which there are no formal laws may find that the people of a community make life uncomfortable for them. The community may publicly condemn the person (shaming) or avoid interacting with the person (shunning).

Definition: laws

Explicitly stated rules that are enforced.

Definition: social sanctions

Ways of communicating disapproval or putting pressure on people who violate a community's mores.

One way to look at the difference between folkways and mores is to say that folkways reflect what a cultural community regards as appropriate or inappropriate, polite or rude. Mores, however, reflect what a community considers as morally or ethically right or wrong.

Values

Cultural values are closely associated with both the beliefs and norms of a cultural community. **Values** can be defined as the symbolic, abstract concepts or standards that represent the ideals of a group. They point to what the group most regards as right, good, beautiful, desirable, etc. Values are often identified in discourse by means of words or phrases, e.g., "freedom," "equality," "filial piety," "respect for elders." Values, though, go hand in hand with beliefs. Think of a value, when articulated, as a shorthand way of referring to a belief. But of course, a value is hardly a value unless it is acted upon. In other words, we generally think of a value as a guide to conduct.

Definition: values

The symbolic, abstract concepts or standards that represent the ideals of a group.

What purpose do values serve? – we might want to ask. For one thing, shared cultural values may help promote group cohesion. They encourage group members to behave in ways that the group considers appropriate, proper, honorable, praiseworthy, and the like. As is true also with beliefs and norms though, not everyone necessarily adheres to the widely shared values of a culture to the same degree, and sometimes not at all. In fact, some cultural values may even be in conflict with other values.

Customs and Traditions

Customs and traditions are two more aspects of non-material culture. A **custom** is a widely accepted way of doing something, specific to a particular society that has developed through repetition over a long period of time. A **tradition**, as defined by David Gross (1992), is "a set of practices, a constellation of beliefs, or mode of thinking that exists in the present, but was inherited from the past" (8). Gross further elaborates, writing that a tradition "can be a set of observances, a collection of doctrines or teachings, a particular type of behavior, a way of thinking about the world or oneself, a way of regarding others or interpreting reality."

Definition: custom

A widely accepted way of doing something, specific to a particular society that has developed through repetition over a long period of time.

Definition: tradition

A set of practices, a constellation of beliefs, or mode of thinking that exists in the present, but was inherited from the past.

Gross (1992) acknowledges that customs and traditions have much in common and that therefore the differences between them are easily blurred. He insists, however, that from the perspective of society as a whole, customs are less important than traditions. Compared with traditions, Gross claims, customs involve "mostly superficial modes of behavior" that "are not as heavily invested with value." For example, says Gross, long-standing forms of greeting, like bowing in Japan, or shaking hands in the U.S. are "relatively insignificant social habits," better characterized as customs than as traditions. Still, Gross admits, "the boundary separating custom from tradition is not always easy to discern" (12).

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4.1.3: Culture As An Adaptive Mechanism

ADAPTATION

An **adaptation** is any alteration in the structure or functioning of an organism (or group of organisms) that improves its ability to survive and reproduce in its environment. Adaptations occur in response to **stressors** or changes in the environment in which the organism lives. Stressors can be *abiotic (*climate or high altitude), *biotic* (disease), or social (war and psychological stress). All organisms, including humans, have the ability to adapt biologically, which is referred to as **biological plasticity**. However, what makes humans unique is the extent to which we rely on culture to adapt to our environment.

Definition: adaptation

Any alteration in the structure or functioning of an organism (or group of organisms) that improves its ability to survive and reproduce in its environment.

Definition: biological plasticity

The ability to adapt biologically in response to the environment.

Definition: stressors

Something that causes strain or tension.

Biological Adaptation

Other species rely primarily on biological adaption for living in their respective environments. Biological adaptations can be short-term, long-term, or genetic. Which type of biological adaptation is activated often depends on the severity and duration of stressors in the environment. *Short-term acclimatization* can occur within seconds of exposure to a stressor. This type of response quickly reverses when the stressor is no longer present. Imagine stepping out of an air-conditioned building or car into a 90-degree day. Your body will quickly begin to perspire in an attempt to cool your body temperature and return to homeostasis. When the temperature declines, so will your perspiration. Tanning, which can occur in hours, is another short-term response, in this case, to increased UV-radiation exposure. Tans are generally lost during the months when UV-radiation decreases.

Developmental acclimatization occurs during an individual's growth and development. Note that these cannot take place once the individual is fully grown. There is usually a "magic time window" of when developmental acclimatization can occur. This adaptation can take months to years to acquire. One example of this is the efficient respiratory system of those who have grown up at high altitudes. Those who were born at high altitudes tend to develop larger lung capacities than those who move there later in life.

Note

A developmental adjustment can occur in response to cultural stressors as well. Intentional body deformation has been documented throughout human history. The ancient Maya elite used cradleboards to reshape the skull. Footbinding in China, now an illegal practice, was considered a mark of beauty and enabled girls to find a wealthy spouse.

Genetic adaptations can occur when a stressor is constant and lasts for many generations. The presence of the sickle cell allele in some human populations is one example. Keep in mind that genetic adaptations are *environmentally specific*. In other words, while a particular gene may be advantageous to have in one environment, it may be detrimental to have in another environment. The sickle-cell allele is a genetic adaptation in response to living in an environment where malaria is prevalent. However, for those living in non-malarial environments, it is no longer advantageous and actually a serious disease.

Cultural Adaptation

A **cultural adaption** is the knowledge or behavior that enables humans or groups to adjust, survive, and thrive in their environment. One way humans culturally adapt to their environment is through the use of tools. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, some non-human species do have a rudimentary culture as evidenced by their use of tools. Whether it is dolphins using sponges to protect their beaks when hunting fish on the ocean floor, chimpanzees using sticks to "fish" for termites, otters using a rock to break open a shell or humans hunting with a bow and arrow, the use of tools is a cultural adaptation that improves the

species chances of survival in their environment. Humans, however, "use culture *instrumentally*...to fulfill their basic biological needs for food, drink, shelter, comfort, and reproduction" (Kottak 2012, p. 21) as well as fulfilling basic psychological and emotional needs.

Definition: cultural adaptation

The knowledge or behavior that enables humans or groups to adjust, survive and thrive in their environment.



Figure 4.1.3.1: Cultural Adaptations - Tool Use

Image 1: Sea Otter uses a rock to break a shell open, 2008, by Brocken Inaglory under CC BY-SA 3.0.
Image 2: Bonobo at the San Diego Zoo "fishing" for termites, 2005, by Mike R. under CC BY-SA 3.0.
Image 3: Macaca fascicularis aurea using a stone tool, 2013, by Haslam M, Gumert MD, Biro D, Carvalho S, Malaivijitnond S under CC BY.
Image 4: Young Man with a Bow and Arrow, Lubwa, Zambia, c1905-1940, by Unknown under Public Domain.

Cultural adaptations can occur at any time and may be as simple as putting on a coat when it is cold or as complicated as engineering, building, and installing a heating system in a building, or building a space station for human habitation. Cultural adaptation has enabled humans to survive in harsh environments. However, not all cultural adaptations have been beneficial. While the goal of adaptive traits is to enhance human ability to be successful and survive in their environment, some traits have become *maladaptive***.** That is they have become more harmful than helpful and could actually threaten the survival of the people. One example is the use of air conditioners. Although air conditioners improved our lives and made it easier to live in hot and humid conditions, older air conditioners released chlorofluorocarbons and contributed to the depletion of the ozone layer which protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays. Over a long period of time, this would have a negative effect on life on earth.



Figure 4.1.3.2: Self-portrait of Tracy Caldwell Dyson in the Cupola module of the International Space Station observing the Earth below during Expedition 24, 2010, by NASA/Tracy Caldwell Dyson under Public Domain.

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4.1.4: Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism

CULTURAL RELATIVISM

The guiding philosophy of modern anthropology is **cultural relativism**—the idea that we should seek to understand another person's beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their culture rather than our own. Anthropologists do not judge other cultures based on their values nor view other cultural ways of doing things as inferior. Instead, anthropologists seek to understand people's beliefs within the system they have for explaining things.

Definition: cultural relativism

The idea that we should seek to understand another person's beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their culture rather than our own.

Cultural relativism is an important methodological consideration when conducting research. In the field, anthropologists must temporarily suspend their own value, moral, and esthetic judgments and seek to understand and respect the values, morals, and esthetics of the other culture on their terms. This can be a challenging task, particularly when a culture is significantly different from the one in which they were raised.

A Young Anthropologist's Experience

Katie Nelson, Inver Hills Community College

During my first field experience in Brazil, I learned firsthand how challenging cultural relativism could be. Preferences for physical proximity and comfort talking about one's body are among the first differences likely to be noticed by U.S. visitors to Brazil. Compared to Americans, Brazilians generally are much more comfortable standing close, touching, holding hands, and even smelling one another and often discuss each other's bodies. Children and adults commonly refer to each other using playful nicknames that refer to their body size, body shape, or skin color. Neighbors and even strangers frequently stopped me on the street to comment on the color of my skin (It concerned some as being overly pale or pink—Was I ill? Was I sunburned?), the texture of my hair (How did I get it so smooth? Did I straighten my hair?), and my body size and shape ("You have a nice bust, but if you lost a little weight around the middle you would be even more attractive!").

During my first few months in Brazil, I had to remind myself constantly that these comments were not rude, disrespectful, or inappropriate as I would have perceived them to be in the United States. On the contrary, it was one of the ways that people showed affection toward me. From a culturally relativistic perspective, the comments demonstrated that they cared about me, were concerned with my well-being, and wanted me to be part of the community. Had I not taken a culturally relativistic view at the outset and instead judged the actions based on my cultural perspective, I would have been continually frustrated and likely would have confused and offended people in the community. And offending your informants and the rest of the community certainly is not conducive to completing high-quality ethnography! Had I not fully understood the importance of body contact and physical proximity in communication in Brazil, I would have missed an important component of the culture.

ETHNOCENTRISM

Another perspective that has been rejected by anthropologists is **ethnocentrism**—the tendency to view one's own culture as most important and correct and as a stick by which to measure all other cultures. People who are ethnocentric view their own cultures as central and normal and reject all other cultures as inferior and morally suspect. As it turns out, many people and cultures are ethnocentric to some degree; ethnocentrism is a common human experience. Why do we respond the way we do? Why do we behave the way we do? Why do we believe what we believe? Most people find these kinds of questions difficult to answer. Often the answer is simply "because that is how it is done." They believe what they believe because that is what one normally believes and doing things any other way seems wrong.

Definition: ethnocentrism

The tendency to view one's own culture as most important and correct and as a stick by which to measure all other cultures.

Ethnocentrism is not a useful perspective in contexts in which people from different cultural backgrounds come into close contact with one another, as is the case in many cities and communities throughout the world. People increasingly find that they must adopt

culturally relativistic perspectives in governing communities and as a guide for their interactions with members of the community. For anthropologists in the field, cultural relativism is especially important. We must set aside our innate ethnocentrisms and let cultural relativism guide our inquiries and interactions with others so that our observations are not biased. Cultural relativism is at the core of the discipline of anthropology.

Cultural Relativism and Fieldwork

Objectivity and Activist Anthropology

Despite the importance of cultural relativism, it is not always possible and at times is inappropriate to maintain complete objectivity in the field. Researchers may encounter cultural practices that are an affront to strongly held moral values or that violate the human rights of a segment of a population. In other cases, they may be conducting research in part to advocate for a particular issue or for the rights of a marginalized group.

Take, for example, the practice of female genital cutting (FGC), also known as female genital mutilation (FGM), a practice that is common in various regions of the world, especially in parts of Africa and the Middle East. Such practices involving modification of female genitals for non-medical and cultural reasons range from clitoridectomy (partial or full removal of the clitoris) to infibulation, which involves removal of the clitoris and the inner and outer labia and suturing to narrow the vaginal opening, leaving only a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual fluid Anthropologists working in regions where such practices are common often understandably have a strong negative opinion, viewing the practice as unnecessary medically and posing a risk of serious infection, infertility, and complications from childbirth. They may also be opposed to it because they feel that it violates the right of women to experience sexual pleasure, something they likely view as a fundamental human right. Should the anthropologist intervene to prevent girls and women from being subjected to this practice?

Anthropologist Janice Boddy studied FGC/FGM in rural northern Sudan and sought to explain it from a culturally relativistic perspective. She found that the practice persists, in part, because it is believed to preserve a woman's chastity and curb her sexual desire, making her less likely to have affairs once she is married. Boddy's research showed how the practice makes sense in the context of a culture in which a woman's sexual conduct is a symbol of her family's honor, which is important culturally.[5]

Boddy's relativistic explanation helps make the practice comprehensible and allows cultural outsiders to understand how it is internally culturally coherent. But the question remains. Once anthropologists understand why people practice FGC/FGM, should they accept it? Because they uncover the cultural meaning of a practice, must they maintain a neutral stance or should they fight a practice viewed as an injustice? How does an anthropologist know what is right?

Unfortunately, answers to these questions are rarely simple, and anthropologists as a group do not always agree on an appropriate professional stance and responsibility. Nevertheless, examining practices such as FGC/FGM can help us understand the debate over objectivity versus "activism" in anthropology more clearly. Some anthropologists feel that striving for objectivity in ethnography is paramount. That even if objectivity cannot be completely achieved, anthropologists' ethnography should be free from as much subjective opinion as possible. Others take the opposite stance and produce anthropological research and writing as a means of fighting for equality and justice for disempowered or voiceless groups. The debate over how much (if any) activism is acceptable is ongoing. What is clear is that anthropologists are continuing to grapple with the contentious relationship between objectivity and activism in ethnographic research.

NOTES

5. Janice Bodd, *Civilizing Women: British Crusades in Colonial Sudan* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). ↵

Adapted From

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4.1.5: Patterns of Culture

CULTURAL UNIVERSALS

Often, a comparison of one culture to another will reveal obvious differences, but all cultures also share common elements. **Cultural universals** are patterns or traits that are found in all cultures. Anthropologist George Murdock first recognized the existence of cultural universals while studying systems of kinship around the world. Murdock found that cultural universals often revolve around basic human survival, such as finding food, clothing, and shelter, or around shared human experiences, such as birth and death or illness and healing. Through his research, Murdock identified other universals including language, the concept of personal names, and, interestingly, jokes. Humor seems to be a universal way to release tensions and create a sense of unity among people (Murdock 1949). Other examples of cultural universals are family, gender roles, an incest taboo, belief in the supernatural, marriage, art, dance, and music.

Definition: cultural universals

Patterns or traits that are found in all cultures.

Just because a trait is a cultural universal does not mean it is expressed in the same manner in all cultures. For example, every human society recognizes a family structure that regulates sexual reproduction and the care of children. Even so, how that family unit is defined and how it functions varies. In many Asian cultures, for example, family members from all generations commonly live together in one household. In these cultures, young adults continue to live in the extended household family structure until they marry and join their spouse's household, or they may remain and raise their own nuclear family within the extended family's homestead. In the United States, by contrast, individuals are expected to leave home and live independently for a period before forming a family unit that consists of parents and their offspring. Other cultural universals include customs like funeral rites, weddings, and celebrations of births. However, each culture may view and enact these rituals and ceremonies quite differently.



Figure 4.1.5.1: Dance, a cultural universal.
Image 1. Children from Mwahyeran traditional dance group, Tanzania, 2010, by AnabaNunu under CC BY-SA 4.0.
Image 2. Fiestas de Invierno de Perquin, El Salvador, 2005, by Jose Huwaidi under CC BY-SA 4.0.
Image 3. Armenian National Dance in Aznavour Square, Armenia, 2018, by Armineaghayan under CC BY-SA 4.0.

GENERALITIES

Cultural generalities are those patterns or traits that are found in several, but not all, societies. One such generality that exists in some cultural groups and not others is the *nuclear family.* As discussed above, in many societies, the family unit includes more than just parents and children. In those cultures, the nuclear family is embedded in a larger family unit such as extended families, lineages, or clans. Family structures will be covered in a later chapter of this book.

Definition: cultural generalities

Patterns or traits that are found in several, but not all, societies.

While some generalities, such as family units, exist as a result of *independent invention* due to similar environmental or cultural circumstances, others result from the interaction between cultural groups. One example of this is the English language. English is spoken in many countries around the world for several reasons. First, North America and Australians both speak English because of a common cultural ancestor, or cultural inheritance (Kottak 2012). Both continents were the destination of many English settlers. Another reason for generalities is **colonialism**, "the political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people

by a foreign power for an extended time" (Kottak 2012, p. 215). Many of the countries that speak the English language today were once colonies of England. Finally, generalities can be the result of *diffusion* (discussed later in this chapter), which occurs when cultural groups have frequent contact.

Definition: colonialism

The political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power for an extended time.

PARTICULARITIES

Although, because of diffusion, they are increasingly rare to find, a **cultural particularity** is a distinct trait or feature that is confined to a single place, culture, or society (Kottak 2012, p. 27). Many particularities today exist in foods such as South Carolinas mustard pork barbeque or Newfoundland's cod tongues. However, a cultural group may adopt a new trait from another cultural group, the trait can be modified to fit their specific needs or preferences creating its own version of that cultural trait. For example, a country may have a McDonald's Restaurant, but you may not find the traditional American Big Mac on the menu.

Definition: cultural particularity

A distinct trait or feature that is confined to a single place, culture, or society.

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4.1.6: Levels of Culture

Anthropologists recognize three levels of culture: *international*, *national*, and *subculture*. Keep in mind that while anthropologists have classified these three general patterns, it is acknowledged that there is variation within any given culture. Even at the individual level, there may be differences from the dominant culture. While most people don't think about their culture at the most general levels, these levels do impact us even if we're not aware of it. One of the criticisms of the culture concept is that it generalizes and stereotypes groups of people. Indeed as you read about the levels of culture you may agree with this criticism. However, these generalizations can be used to develop a starting point in understanding a culture.

INTERNATIONAL CULTURE

International culture refers to cultural traits that extend beyond national boundaries. These cultural traits and patterns spread through diffusion, migration, colonization, and globalization (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). Once again, an obvious example would be Canada, the United States, Australia, and Great Britain. These countries share common traits because they have a common language and ancestral cultural heritage. Other examples are evident in the adoption and use of technology and social media across continents. For example, computers and mobile devices allow people to live and operate across national boundaries enabling them to create and sustain an international culture around a common interest or purpose (i.e., Olympics, United Nations, World Cup, etc.).

Definition: international culture

Cultural traits that extend beyond national boundaries.

NATIONAL CULTURE

In contrast, **national culture** is the beliefs, behavior patterns, values, cultural traits, and institutions shared within a country. National culture is most easily recognizable in the form of symbols such as flags, logos, and colors as well as sound including national anthems and musical styles. Although it is a mistake to automatically assume that everyone in a large multicultural country like the United States shares a common culture, generally most people could agree on some core values on some level. **Core values** are "the key, basic, or central values that integrate culture and help distinguish it from others" (Kottak 2012, p. 21). Gary Althen (2003), in the essay "American Values and Assumptions", identifies some American core values such as individualism, freedom, equality, competitiveness, privacy, achievement, and work. Japanese culture, on the other hand, stresses different core values such as belonging, harmony, group orientation (interdependence over independence), politeness, modesty, gentleness, patience, and formality (Evason 2016). Again, it is important to remember, when speaking of national culture that all members within that society may not agree with all of the core values.

Definition: national culture

The beliefs, behavior patterns, values, cultural traits, and institutions shared within a country.

Definition: core values

The key, basic, or central values that integrate culture and help distinguish it from others.

Within the national culture, there is also popular culture. The term **popular culture** refers to the pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in mainstream society. Popular culture events might include a parade, a baseball game, or the season finale of a television show. Rock and pop music—"pop" is short for "popular"—are part of popular culture. Popular culture is often expressed and spread via commercial media such as radio, television, movies, the music industry, publishers, and corporate-run websites.

Definition: popular culture

The pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in mainstream society.



Figure 4.1.6.1: A keyboard showcasing social media platforms that have contributed to popular culture, 2018, by Today Testing under CC BY-SA 4.0.

SUBCULTURES

Subcultures, another level of culture, are smaller groups of people who share cultural traits and patterns within the same country. Subcultures have shared experiences and common cultural distinctions, but they are a part of the larger society or cultural system. Subcultures have their own set of symbols, meanings, and behavioral norms, which develop by interacting with one another. Subcultures develop their own self-culture, or *idioculture*, that has significant meaning to members of the group and creates social boundaries for membership and social acceptance (Griswold 2013).

Definition: subculture

Smaller groups of people who share cultural traits and patterns within the same country.

Thousands of subcultures exist within the United States. Ethnic, racial groups, and geographic regions share the language or dialect, food, and customs of their heritage. Other subcultures are united by shared experiences. Biker culture revolves around a dedication to motorcycles. Some subcultures are formed by members who possess traits or preferences that differ from the majority of a society's population. The body modification community embraces aesthetical additions to the human body, such as tattoos, piercings, and certain forms of plastic surgery. In the United States, adolescents often form subcultures to develop a shared youth identity. Alcoholics Anonymous offers support to those suffering from alcoholism. But even as members of a subculture band together, they still identify with and participate in the larger society.



Figure 4.1.6.1: Subcultures. Derived from Subcultures by jodieinblack under CC BY.

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4.1.7: Culture Change

One of the characteristics of culture is that it is dynamic. It is always changing. New objects are added to material culture every day, and they affect nonmaterial culture as well. Cultures change when something new (say, railroads or smartphones) opens up new ways of living and when new ideas enter a culture (say, as a result of travel or globalization). We are living in a world where globalization has increased the speed that our cultures are changing. In addition to globalization, there are three main mechanisms of cultural change: *diffusion*, *independent invention*, and *acculturation*.

MECHANISMS OF CULTURAL CHANGE

Americans travel overseas and return with a new appreciation of Thai noodles or Italian gelato. Television and the Internet introduce individuals to the lifestyles and values of different cultures around the world. Twitter feeds from public demonstrations in one nation have encouraged political protesters in another. This kind of transfer of material objects and ideas from one culture to another is called diffusion. **Diffusion** is the borrowing of cultural traits between cultures, either directly or through intermediaries (Kottak 2012). *Direct diffusion* occurs when two cultural groups interact with each other directly, such as in trade, tourism, and even during times of war. *Indirect diffusion* is when cultural objects and traits move to one culture to another through a "third-party", with no first-hand contact between the two cultural groups. Finally, *forced diffusion* is what it sounds like. A dominant cultural group imposes its beliefs and values on another subjugated group, such as colonialism. With all the advances in technology, mass media, and the Internet, must cultural borrowing is the result of indirect diffusion.

Definition: diffusion

The borrowing of cultural traits between cultures, either directly or through intermediaries.



Figure 4.1.7.1: Diffusion
Image 1: Black Lives Matter, Downtown Baltimore, 2016, John Lucia by John Lucia under CC BY 2.0.
Image 2: Black Lives Matter - Melbourne (Australia) Rally, 2020, by Matt Hrkac under CC BY 2.0.
Image 3: Black Lives Matter Paris, 2020, by Bastian Greshake Tzovaras under CC BY-SA 2.0.
Image 4: Political Banner "Black Lives Matter", Berlin, Germany, 2020, by Levin Holtkamp under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Independent invention is "the process by which humans innovate, creatively finding solutions to problems" (Kottak 2012, p. 34). One famous example is the development of agriculture in both the Middle-East and Mesoamerica. Likewise, we see pyramid-like structures in both the Middle East as well as North, Central, and South America. Remember, culture is an integrated whole, when there is a change in one area it affects other areas within that culture. The development of agriculture caused other changes such as social and political organizations, religions, and economic systems. As discussed earlier in this chapter, independent invention is one reason for cultural generalities when different cultural groups find similar solutions to similar problems.

Definition: independent invention

The process by which humans innovate, creatively finding solutions to problems



Figure 4.1.7.2: Independent Invention
Image 1: The Pyramids of Giza, Egypt, 2006, by Ricardo Liberato under CC BY-SA 2.0.
Image 2: Teotihuacan, Pyramid of the Moon, 2015, by Arian Zwegers under CC BY 2.0.
Image 3: Aerial view of Cahokia Mounds State Park under Public Domain.

Finally, change as a result of an ongoing exchange of cultural traits between groups that have continuous first-hand contact is referred to as **acculturation** (Kottak 2012). Although both groups may experience change as a part of their contact with each other, they remain two distinct cultural groups. *Pidgin*, which is a mixed language that results when two cultures have regular interaction is one example. Other examples would be Tex-Mex food, music, dance, clothing, and technology. Acculturation will be discussed more in the chapter on Race and Ethnicity.



Figure 4.1.7.3: A Mix of Culture
Image: Tex-Mex Nachos, 2018, by Kurt Kaiser under CC0 1.0.

Definition: acculturation

An ongoing exchange of cultural traits between groups that have continuous first-hand contact; both groups experience change while remaining two distinct groups.

GLOBALIZATION

The integration of world markets and technological advances of the last decades have allowed for greater exchange between cultures through the processes of **globalization**. Beginning in the 1980s, Western governments began to deregulate social services while granting greater liberties to private businesses. As a result, world markets became dominated by multinational companies, a new state of affairs at that time. We have since come to refer to this integration of international trade and finance markets as globalization. Increased communications and air travel have further opened doors for international business relations, facilitating the flow not only of goods but also of information and people as well (Scheuerman 2014). Globalization will be covered in more detail in a later chapter of this book.

Definition: globalization

A series of processes that work trans-nationally to promote change in a world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent (Kottak 2012 p. 34).

CULTURAL LAG

Though technology continues to impact changes in society, culture does not always change at the same pace. Often there is a delay when integrating a new feature into the rest of the culture. Why? Because often other elements of the culture have to change to meet or maintain the needs of the new cultural trait or feature. The automobile is a good example of an invention that took some time to become a part of the mainstream culture. People had to be persuaded that the automobile was a better form of transportation, roads had to be constructed, a way to procure fuel needed to be developed, mechanics were needed to fix cars,

efficient production of cars had to be developed, safety concerns needed to be addressed as well as rules of the road, and numerous other elements had to catch up with the invention of the automobile.

Material culture tends to be adopted more quickly than nonmaterial culture; technology can spread through society in a matter of months, but it can take generations for the ideas and beliefs of society to change. Sociologist William F. Ogburn coined the term **culture lag** to refer to this time that elapses between the introduction of a new item of material culture and its acceptance as part of the nonmaterial culture (Ogburn 1957). People are usually open to adapt or try new objects and inventions before modifying their values, beliefs, norms, expressive symbols, or practices. In other words, influencing fashion trends is easier than altering people's religious beliefs.

Definition: culture lag

The time that elapses between the introduction of a new item of material culture and its acceptance as part of the nonmaterial culture.

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4.1.8: End of Chapter Discussion

Discussion

1. Why is the concept of culture difficult to define? What do you think are the most important elements of culture?
2. In the twenty-first century, people have much greater contact with members of other cultures than they did in the past. Which topics or concerns should be priorities for future studies in culture?
3. COVID-19 had an impact on all cultures around the world and there were many short-term changes in behavior that we all had to incorporate into our daily lives. Since culture is integrated, what were some of the short-term changes to other aspects of our culture? What are some long-term cultural changes that we may see as a result of the pandemic?

GLOSSARY

Acculturation: An ongoing exchange of cultural traits between groups that have continuous first-hand contact; both groups experience change while remaining two distinct groups.

Adaptation: Any alteration in the structure or functioning of an organism (or group of organisms) that improves its ability to survive and reproduce in its environment.

Beliefs: All the mental aspects of culture including values, norms, philosophies, worldview, knowledge, and so forth.

Biological plasticity: An ability to adapt biologically in response to the environment.

Colonialism: The political, social, economic, and cultural domination of a territory and its people by a foreign power for an extended time.

Core Values: The key, basic, or central values that integrate culture and help distinguish it from others.

Cultural adaptation: The knowledge or behavior that enables humans or groups to adjust, survive and thrive in their environment.

Cultural generalities: Patterns or traits that are found in several, but not all, societies.

Cultural particularity: A distinct trait or feature that is confined to a single place, culture, or society.

Cultural relativism: The idea that we should seek to understand another person's beliefs and behaviors from the perspective of their culture rather than our own.

Cultural universals: Patterns or traits that are found in all cultures.

Culture: A set of beliefs, practices, and symbols that are learned and shared. Together, they form an all-encompassing, integrated whole that binds people together and shapes their worldview and lifeways.

Culture lag: The time that elapses between the introduction of a new item of material culture and its acceptance as part of the nonmaterial culture.

Custom: A widely accepted way of doing something, specific to a particular society that has developed through repetition over a long period of time.

Diffusion: The borrowing of cultural traits between cultures, either directly or through intermediaries.

Enculturation: The process of learning culture.

Ethnocentrism: The tendency to view one's own culture as most important and correct and as a stick by which to measure all other cultures.

Folkways: A loose collection of usual or customary ways in which the members of a particular cultural community behave.

Globalization: A series of processes that work trans-nationally to promote change in a world in which nations and people are increasingly interlinked and mutually dependent.

Independent invention: The process by which humans innovate, creatively finding solutions to problems.

International culture: Cultural traits that extend beyond national boundaries.

Laws: Explicitly stated rules that are enforced.

Mores: The standards of moral conduct and ethical behavior that the people in a cultural community expect of one another; what a community considers morally or ethically right or wrong.

National culture: The beliefs, behavior patterns, values, cultural traits and institutions shared within a country.

Norms: The expectations or rules, formal or informal, about what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior in a particular society.

Practices: Behaviors and actions that may be motivated by belief or performed without reflection as part of everyday routines.

Popular culture: The pattern of cultural experiences and attitudes that exist in mainstream society.

Social sanctions: Ways of communicating disapproval or putting pressure on people who violate a community's mores.

Society: Organized life in groups.

Stressors: Something that causes strain or tension.

Subcultures: Smaller groups of people who share cultural traits and patterns within the same country.

Symbol: Something, verbal or non-verbal, that stands for something else, often without an obvious or natural connection.

Tradition: A set of practices, a constellation of beliefs, or mode of thinking that exists in the present, but was inherited from the past.

Values: The symbolic, abstract concepts or standards that represent the ideals of a group.

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4.2: Social Production of Culture

When people discuss love, they imagine it in their minds and feel it in their hearts even though no one can truly touch love in a physical form. We associate love to a variety of mental and physical interactions, but love itself is not tangible or concrete. Whereas, material culture is associated with physical artifacts projecting a clear understanding of its nature because it is visible, audible, and can be touched. We buy and give gifts to express our love. The material artifact we give to someone is a tangible expression of love. In this example, the expression of non-material culture is evident in material culture (love = gift) and material culture represents non-material culture (gift = love) making both forms cultural "objects."



Figure 4.2.1: Brown Bear Plush Toy Holding Red Rose Flower. (CC BY 4.0; Acharaporn Kamornboonyarush).

Cultural objects become representations of many things and can have many meanings based on the history and biography of an individual, group, or society. Think about the mantra, "Follow your dreams." The expression is often used in the United States when discussing educational and career motivation and planning. For many U.S. citizens, this statement creates an open space for academic or professional choices and opportunities. However, the "object" is limited to the culture of the individual. In other words, your "dream" is limited to the cultural environment and social location you occupy. For example, if you are in a family where men and women fill different roles in work and family then your educational and career choices or pathways are limited to the options within the context of your culture (i.e., values, beliefs, and norms). Afghan culture does not value or permit the education of girls. In Afghanistan, one third of girls marry before 18, and once married they are compelled to drop out of school (Human Rights Watch 2017). The educational and career choices of Afghan girls is limited to the culture of their country and the social location of their gender. This means to "follow your dreams" in Afghanistan is confined to what a dream as an object can represent based on the gender of the person.

How does culture become an "object" or solidified, socially accepted, and followed? According to Griswold (2013) people create, articulate, and communicate culture. However, this does not mean every cultural idea or creation is accepted by society. Though people create culture, other people must receive or accept culture to become tangible, real, or recognized as an object including artifacts. The creation of cultural ideas and concepts must have an audience to receive it and articulate its meaning in order for culture to be established and accepted. The context of the social world including time, place, conditions, and social forces influence whether an audience accepts or rejects a cultural object. Consider the many social media applications available to us today. With so many social media outlets and options available, which are the most recognized and used? Which social media apps have become part of our everyday lives, and which do we expect people to use and be familiar with as a norm?

When Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams created Twitter, they introduced a cultural idea to society. As word spread about the application and people began to use it, communication about its relevance and usefulness grew. As the network of users grew more and more people were intrigued to discover the application and make it part of their lives leading to Twitter becoming a cultural object. Not only did Twitter need to demonstrate relevance to reach potential users, but it also had to be timely and applicable in context or to the needs of modern society.

Since the development of the Internet, many people and organizations have developed a variety of social media applications, but only a few apps have transcended time to become part of our culture because they were able to develop an audience or significant number of cultural receivers to legitimize them. Other than Twitter, what social media applications have become part of our culture? Research and describe the demographics of the audience or receivers for each application identified and discuss the context or environment that made the app relevant for its time and users.

DISSECTING CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION-cyberbullying

Consider the social issue of cyberbullying.

1. Describe the social context or environment that has led to the development and growth of this issue.

2. What cultural elements do we associate with cyberbullying? What are the values, beliefs, norms, symbolic expressions, and artifacts or materials used by perpetrators to create a culture of cyberbullying?
3. How do victims, observers, and the public receive this culture? What meanings do people associate by the expressions used by perpetrators that make the issue "real"?
4. Reflecting on your responses to Questions 1-3, explain how social context, cultural creation, and cultural acceptance work to make the issue of cyberbullying a cultural object.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

4.3: Culture and Meaning

Learning Objectives

At the end of the module, students will be able to:

1. explain the relationship between culture and the social world
2. understand the role and impact of culture on society
3. describe concepts central to cultural sociology
4. summarize and apply the theoretical perspectives on the study of culture

Culture is an expression of our lives. It molds our identity and connection to the social world. Whether it is our values, beliefs, norms, language, or everyday artifacts each element of culture reflects who we are and influences our position in society. If you think about how we live, communicate, think and act, these parts of our existence develop from the values, beliefs, and norms we learn from others, the language and symbols we understand, and the artifacts or materials we use. Culture is embedded into everyday life and is the attribute in which others view and understand us.

4.3.1: Link Between Culture and Society

4.3.2: Defining Culture

4.3.3: Cultural Sociology

4.3.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Culture

4.3.S: Culture and Meaning (Summary)

Thumbnail: !Kung woman and child sharing a meal. Image used with permission (CC-SA-BY 4.0; Staehler).

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4.3.1: Link Between Culture and Society

Culture is both expressive and social. Neither culture nor society exist in the real world rather it is the thoughts and behaviors of people that constructs a society, its culture, and meanings (Griswold 2013). People build the world we live in including the cultural attributes we choose to obtain, exhibit, and follow. Societies communicate and teach culture as part of the human experience.

Historically, culture referred to characteristics and qualities of the fine arts, performing arts, and literature connecting culture to social status. This perspective emphasized a subculture shared by the social elite or upper class and has been historically characterized as civilized culture. This perspective within the humanities studied the “ideal type” or “high culture” of affluent social groups depicting whom was “cultured” or rather was wealthy and educated in society lending itself to a ranking of cultures in its study.



Figure 4.3.1.1: Active Adult Artist Ballerina. (CC0 1.0; by Pixabay).

In the 19th century, anthropologist Edward B. Tyler (1871) introduced culture as a complex social structure encompassing “... knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” This definition focused on culture as a social attribute of humanity. Social scientists adopted this perspective expanding the study of culture beyond the ethnocentric elitism of “high culture.” With emphasis on human social life as a reflection of culture, social scientists sought to understand not only how culture reflects society but also how society reflects culture. These new insights inspired social scientists to examine the practices of people lending itself to a sociological perspective on culture.

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4.3.2: Defining Culture

Culture is universal. Every society has culture. Culture touches every "aspect of who and what we are" and becomes a lens of how we see and evaluate the world around us (Henslin 2011:36). Culture molds human nature and people learn to express nature in cultural ways. The sociological perspective acknowledges that all people are cultured.

Each generation transmits culture to the next providing us a roadmap and instruction on how to live our lives. Cultural transmission occurs through the learning and expression of traditions and customs. Learning your own group's culture is **enculturation**. Adults are agents of enculturation responsible for passing on culture to each generation.

Through learning, people develop individual cultural characteristics that are part of a social pattern and integrated set of traits expressing a group's core values (Kottak and Kozitis 2003). Thus, cultures are integrated and patterned systems serving a variety of social functions within groups. Enculturation gives members of a group a process to think symbolically, use language and tools, share common experiences and knowledge, and learn by observation, experience, as well as unconsciously from each other (Kottak and Kozitis 2003). The commonalities we share through culture establish familiarity and comfort among members of our own group.

Non-Material vs. Material Culture

Culture is either non-material or material. **Non-material culture** includes psychological and spiritual elements influencing the way individuals think and act. **Material culture** refers to physical artifacts people use and consume. Immaterial aspects of culture reflect social values, beliefs, norms, expressive symbols, and practices. Though these cultural elements are intangible, they often take on a physical form in our minds. Non-material culture becomes real in our perceptions and we begin to view them as objects as in the belief of God or other deity. Though we cannot physically see, hear, or touch a God belief makes them real and imaginable to us.

Values or ideals define what is desirable in life and guides our preferences and choices. Changes in core values may seem threatening to some individuals or societies as "a threat to a way of life" (Henslin 2011:53). A strong bind to core values can also blind individuals to reality or objectivity reinforcing fallacies and stereotypes. Throughout history, there have always been differences between what people value (their ideal or public culture) and how they actually live their lives (their real or personal culture).

Beliefs sometimes mirror values. One's belief system may align or determine their values influencing thoughts and actions. Beliefs are not always spiritual or supernatural. For example, the belief in love or feelings of affection are internal emotions or physical reactions that exhibit physiological changes in human chemistry. Some beliefs are true representations of metaphysical or abstract thinking which transcend the laws of nature such as faith or superstitions.

CULTURAL INVENTORY

1. What is your personal cultural inventory? Describe your values and beliefs, the social norms in which you conform, the expressive symbols (including language) you understand and use regularly, your daily practices, and the artifacts you use frequently and those you treasure.
2. How did you learn culture? Explain the socializing agents responsible for teaching you the traditions, customs, and rituals you live by and follow.
3. What impact does culture have on your identity? Discuss how your culture influences your self-image, views, and role in society.
4. How does culture influence your thinking and behavior towards others? Explain how your culture impacts the image or understanding you have about others including assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Norms or rules develop out of a group's values and beliefs. When people defy the rules, they receive social reactions resulting in a sanction. Sanctions are a form of social control (Griffiths, Keirns, Strayer, Cody-Rydzewsk, Scaramuzzo, Sadler, Vyain, Byer, and Jones 2015). When people follow the rules, they receive a positive sanction or reward, and when they break the rules, they receive a negative one or punishment that may include social isolation.

Symbols help people understand the world (Griffiths et al. 2015). Symbols include gestures, signs, signals, objects, and words. Language is the symbolic system people use to communicate both verbally and in writing (Griffiths et al. 2015). Language constantly evolves and provides the basis for sharing cultural experiences and ideas.

The **Sapir-Worf Hypothesis** suggests people experience the world through symbolic language that derives from culture itself (Griffiths et al. 2015). If you see, hear, or think of a word, it creates a mental image in your head helping you understand and interpret meaning. If you are not familiar with a word or its language, you are unable to comprehend meaning creating a cultural gap or boundary between you and the cultural world around you. Language makes symbolic thought possible.

Practices or the behaviors we carry out develop from or in response to our thoughts. We fulfill rituals, traditions, or customs based on our values, beliefs, norms, and expressive symbols.

Culture dictates and influences how people live their lives. Cultural practices become habitual from frequent repetition (Henslin 2011). Habitualization leads to institutionalization by consensus of a social group. This results in cultural patterns and systems becoming logical and the viewed as the norm.

Material culture is inherently unnatural, such as buildings, machines, electronic devices, clothing, hairstyles, etc. (Henslin 2011). Dialogue about culture often ignores its close tie to material realities in society. The cultural explanations we receive from family, friends, school, work, and media justify cultural realities and utilities of the artifacts we use and consume. Human behavior is purposeful and material culture in our lives derives from the interests of our socializing agents in our environment.

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4.3.3: Cultural Sociology

There is division among sociologists who study culture. Those who study the sociology of culture have limitations on the categorizations of cultural topics and objects restricting the view of culture as a social product or consequence. The theoretical works of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber and the field of anthropology, shaped the sociology of culture. Durkheim found culture and society are interrelated. He explained social structures or institutions serve a functions society. As a collective group, society's culture including its social, political and economic values are essentially part of and reflected in all structures or institutions (Durkheim 1965). Marx believed social power influences culture. He suggested cultural products depend on economics and people who have power are able to produce and distribute culture (Marx 1977). Weber in alignment with the traditional humanities viewpoint emphasized the ability of culture to influence human behavior. His perspective argued some cultures and cultural works are ideal types that could be lost if they were not preserved or archived (Weber 1946). Until the late twentieth century, anthropologists emphasized the importance of art and culture to educate, instill morality, critique society to inspire change (Best 2007). Initial thoughts on culture focused on how culture makes a person. These works accentuated the idea that certain cultural elements (i.e., elite or high culture) make a person cultured.

In contrast, the study of cultural sociology suggests social phenomena is inherently cultural (Alexander 2003). Cultural sociology investigates culture as an explanation of social phenomena. During the cultural turn movement of the 1970s, cultural sociology emerged as a field of study among anthropologists and social scientists evaluating the role of culture in society. Academics expanded their research to the social process in which people communicate meaning, understand the world, construct identity, and express values and beliefs (Best 2007). This new approach incorporates analyzing culture using data from interviews, discussions, and observations of people to understand the social, historical structures and ideological forces that produce and confine culture.

Cultural sociology examines the social meanings and expressions associated with culture. Cultural sociologists study representations of culture including elitist definitions and understanding such as art, literature, and classical music, but also investigate the broad range of culture in everyday social life (Back, Bennett, Edles, Gibson, Inglis, Jacobs, and Woodward 2012). Noting the significance of culture in human social life, sociologists empirically study culture, the impact of culture on social order, the link between culture and society, and the persistence and durability of culture over time (Griswold 2013). Cultural sociology incorporates an interdisciplinary approach drawing on different disciplines because of the broad scope and social influences culture has on people. Culture is inseparable from the acts and influence of cultural practices embedded within social categories (i.e., gender, ethnicity, and social class) and social institutions (i.e., family, school, and work) that construct identities and lifestyle practices of individuals (Giddens 1991; Chaney 1996). In the effort to understand the relationship between culture and society, sociologists study cultural practices, institutions, and systems including the forms of power exhibited among social groups related to age, body and mind, ethnicity, gender, geography, race, religion and belief systems, sex, sexuality, and social class.

CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ART

1. What forms of identity and symbolism did you see within the music video This is America by Childish Gambino (https://youtu.be/VYOjWnS4cMY)?
2. Now, watch the breakdown video that explains the hidden symbolism and forms of cultural identity in the music video This is America by Childish Gambino (https://youtu.be/9_LIP7qguYw).
3. Compare your list and note what things you were able to identify and what things you missed.

"Cultural Identity in Art" by Kristen Kennedy is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Ethnographers and Native Anthropologists

In the study of cultural sociology, many practitioners examine both quantitative and qualitative data to develop an understanding of cultural experiences. **Quantitative** or numeric data provides a framework for understanding observable patterns or trends while **qualitative** or categorical data presents the reasoning behind thoughts and actions associated with patterns or trends.

The collection of qualitative data incorporates scientific methodological approaches including participant observation (observing people as a member of the group), interviews (face-to-face meetings), focus groups (group discussions), or images (pictures or video). Each method focuses on collecting specific types of information to develop a deep understanding about a particular culture and the experiences associated with being a member of that culture.

Ethnographers study people and cultures by using qualitative methods. Ethnography or ethnographic research is the firsthand, field-based study of a particular culture by spending at least one year living with people and learning their customs and practices

(Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). In the field, ethnographers are participant observers and a participant of the group or society of study. Participant observers face challenges in remaining objective, non-bias, and ensuring their participation does not lead or influence others of the group in a specific direction (Kennedy, Norwood, and Jendian 2017). This research approach expects ethnographers to eliminate the risk of contaminating data with interference or bias interpretations as much as humanly possible.



Figure 4.3.3.1: Group of Men on a Desert. (CC BY 4.0; by Follow Alice).

Some researchers choose to study their own culture. These practitioners refer to themselves as **native anthropologists**. Many native anthropologists have experience studying other cultures prior to researching their own (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). The practice of learning how to study other cultures gives practitioners the skills and knowledge they need to study their own culture more objectively. In addition, by studying other cultures then one's own, native anthropologists are able to compare and analyze similarities and differences in cultural perceptions and practices.

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4.3.4: Theoretical Perspectives on Culture

The social structure plays an integral role in the **social location** (i.e., place or position) people occupy in society. Your social location is a result of cultural values and norms from the time-period and place in which you live. Culture effects personal and social development including the way people will think or behave. Cultural characteristics pertaining to age, gender, race, education, income and other social factors influence the location people occupy at any given time.

Furthermore, social location influences how people perceive and understand the world in which we live. People have a difficult time being objective in all contexts because of their social location within cultural controls and standards derived from values and norms. Objective conditions exist without bias because they are measureable and quantifiable (Carl 2013). Subjective concerns rely on judgments rather than external facts. Personal feelings and opinions from a person's social location drive subjective concerns. The **sociological imagination** is a tool to help people step outside subjective or personal biography, and look at objective facts and the historical background of a situation, issue, society, or person (Carl 2013).

PERCEPTIONS OF REALITY

The time period we live (history) and our personal life experiences (biography) influence our perspectives and understanding about others and the world. Our history and biography guide our perceptions of reality reinforcing our personal bias and subjectivity. Relying on subjective viewpoints and perspectives leads to diffusion of misinformation and fake news that can be detrimental to our physical and socio-cultural environment and negatively impact our interactions with others. We must seek out facts and develop knowledge to enhance our objective eye. By using valid, reliable, proven facts, data, and information, we establish credibility and make better decisions for the world and ourselves.

1. Consider a socio-cultural issue you are passionate about and want to change or improve.
2. What is your position on the issue? What ideological or value-laden reasons or beliefs support your position? What facts or empirical data support your position?
3. What portion of your viewpoint or perspective on the issue relies on personal values, opinions, or beliefs in comparison to facts?
4. Why is it important to identity and use empirical data or facts in our lives rather than relying on ideological reasoning and false or fake information?

According to C. Wright Mills (1959), the sociological imagination requires individuals to "think themselves away" in examining personal and social influences on people's life choices and outcomes. Large-scale or macrosociological influences help create understanding about the effect of the social structure and history on people's lives. Whereas, small-scale or microsociological influences focus on interpreting personal viewpoints from an individual's biography. Using only a microsociological perspective leads to an unclear understanding of the world from bias perceptions and assumptions about people, social groups, and society (Carl 2013).



Figure 4.3.4.1: Selective Focus Photography of Woman Using White and Black SLR Camera. (CC BY 4.0; Element5 Digital).

Sociologists use theories to study the people. "The **theoretical paradigms** provide different lenses into the social constructions of life and the relationships of people" (Kennedy, Norwood, and Jendian 2017:22). The theoretical paradigms in sociology help us examine and understand cultural reflections including the social structure and social value culture creates and sustains to fulfill human needs as mediated by society itself. Each paradigm provides an objective framework of analysis and evaluation for understanding the social structure including the construction of the cultural values and norms and their influence on thinking and behavior.

The Theoretical Paradigms

Macrosociology studies large-scale social arrangements or constructs in the social world. The macro perspective examines how groups, organizations, networks, processes, and systems influences thoughts and actions of individuals and groups (Kennedy et al. 2017). Functionalism, Conflict Theory, Feminism, and Environmental Theory are macrosociological perspectives.

Microsociology studies the social interactions of individuals and groups. The micro perspective observes how thinking and behavior influences the social world such as groups, organizations, networks, processes, and systems (Kennedy et al. 2017). Symbolic Interactionism and Exchange Theory are microsociological perspectives.

Functionalism is a macrosociological perspective examining the purpose or contributions of interrelated parts within the social structure. Functionalists examine how parts of society contribute to the whole. Everything in society has a purpose or function. Even a negative contribution helps society discern its function. For example, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs inspired society to define the behavior as undesirable, develop laws, and consequences for people committing such an act. A manifest function in society results in expected outcomes (i.e., using a pencil to develop written communication). Whereas, a latent function has an unexpected result (i.e., using a pencil to stab someone). When a function creates unexpected results that cause hardships, problems, or negative consequences the result is a latent dysfunction.

Conflict Theory is a macrosociological perspective exploring the fight among social groups over resources in society. Groups compete for status, power, control, money, territory, and other resources for economic or other social gain. Conflict Theory explores the struggle between those in power and those who are not in power within the context of the struggle. Cultural wars are common in society, whether controversy over a deity and way of life or ownership and rights over Holy Land.

Symbolic Interactionism is a microsociological perspective observing the influence of interactions on thinking and behavior. Interactionists consider how people interpret meaning and symbols to understand and navigate the social world. Individuals create social reality through verbal and non-verbal interactions. These interactions form thoughts and behaviors in response to others influencing motivation and decision-making. Hearing or reading a word in a language one understands develop a mental image and comprehension about information shared or communicated (i.e., the English word “bread” is most commonly visualized as a slice or loaf and considered a food item).

There are three modern approaches to sociological theory (Carl 2013). **Feminism**, a macrosociological perspective, studies the experiences of women and minorities in the social world including the outcomes of inequality and oppression for these groups. One major focus of the feminist theoretical approach is to understand how age, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and social class interact with gender to determine outcomes for people (Carl 2013). **Exchange Theory** examines decision-making of individuals in society. This microsociological perspective focuses on understanding how people consider a cost versus benefit analysis accentuating their self-interest to make decisions. **Environmental Theory** explores how people adjust to ecological (environmental and social) changes over time (Carl 2013). The focal point of this macrosociological perspective is to figure out how people adapt or evolve over time and share the same ecological space.

Applying Theories

Functionalists view how people work together to create society as a whole. From this perspective, societies needs culture to exist (Griffiths, Keirns, Strayer, Cody-Rydzewsk, Scaramuzzo, Sadler, Vyain, Byer, and Jones 2015). For example, cultural norms or rules function to support the social structure of society, and cultural values guide people in their thoughts and actions. Consider how education is an important concept in the United States because it is valued. The culture of education including the norms surrounding registration, attendance, grades, graduation, and material culture (i.e., classrooms, textbooks, libraries) all support the emphasis placed on the value of education in the United States. Just as members of a society work together to fulfill the needs or society, culture exists to meet the basic needs of its members.

Conflict theorists understand the social structure as inherently unequal resulting from the differences in power based on age, class, education, gender, income, race, sexuality, and other social factors. For a conflict theorist, culture reinforces issues of "privilege” groups and their status in social categories (Griffiths et al. 2015). Inequalities exist in every cultural system. Therefore, cultural norms benefit people with status and power while harming others and at the expense of others. For example, although cultural diversity is valued in the United States, some people and states prohibit interracial marriages, same-sex marriages, and polygamy (Griffiths et al. 2015).

Symbolic interactionists see culture as created and maintained by the interactions and interpretations of each other’s actions. These theorists conceptualize human interactions as a continuous process of deriving meaning from the physical and social environment.

“Every object and action has a symbolic meaning, and language serves as a means for people to represent and communicate their interpretations of these meanings to others” (Griffiths et al. 2015:72). Interactionists evaluate how culture depends on the interpretation of meaning and how individuals interact when exchanging comprehension and meaning. For instance, derogatory terms such as the “N” word might be acceptable among people of the same cultural group but viewed as offensive and antagonistic when used by someone outside of the group.

Feminists explore the cultural experiences of women and minorities. For example, women in Lebanon do not have the right to dissolve a marriage without her husband’s consent even in cases of spousal abuse (Human Rights Watch 2015). Feminism explicitly examines oppression structures within culture systems and the inequity some groups confront in relation to their age, gender, race, social class, sexuality, or other social category.

Exchange theorists observe how culture influences decision-making. Cultural values and beliefs often influence people’s choices about premarital sex and cohabitation before marriage. If you evaluate your decisions on a daily basis, you might see elements of culture behind the motivation driving your choices.

Environmental theorists assess how culture, as part of the social and physical environment, adapts and changes over time. If you contemplate any rule of law, you can see how culture has altered because of shifts in social ideas or ecological fluctuations. Consider the anti-tobacco laws in the United States making it illegal to smoke in public areas as an example of social shifts towards health and wellness or water meters to control and regulate residential water usage and waste as an example of ecological drought and prolonged water shortages in the United States.

THEORETICAL APPLICATION

Popular culture reflects prominent values, beliefs, norms, symbolic expressions, and practices while re-enforcing American ideologies and myths. Develop a written response exploring the depiction of contemporary American culture in an episode of a contemporary television show drama (i.e., NCIS, Game of Thrones, Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., Breaking Bad, etc.)

1. Describe American cultural ideologies or principles portrayed in the show (i.e., unity, diversity, patriotism, etc.).
2. Explain which myths or untruths are evident in the film that express fundamental cultural values or norms.
3. Discuss how the show mirrors social and cultural trends.
4. Analyze the culture portrayed in the television show using each of the theoretical paradigms: Functionalism, Conflict theory, Interactionism, Feminism, Exchange Theory, and Environmental Theory.

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4.3.S: Culture and Meaning (Summary)

Key Terms and Concepts

Beliefs	Native Anthropologists
Conflict Theory	Non-Material Culture
Cultural Sociology	Norms
Culture	Practices
Enculturation	Qualitative Data
Environmental Theory	Quantitative Data
Ethnographers	Sapir-Worf Hypothesis
Exchange Theory	Social Location
Feminism	Sociological Imagination
Functionalism	Symbolic Interactionism
Macrosociology	Symbols
Material Culture	Theoretical paradigms
Microsociology	Values

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4.4: Collective Culture

Among humans, there are universal cultural patterns or elements across groups and societies. **Cultural universals** are common to all humans throughout the globe. Some cultural universals include cooking, dancing, ethics, greetings, personal names, and taboos to name a few. Can you identify at least five other cultural universals shared by all humans?

In thinking about cultural universals, you may have noted the variations or differences in the practice of these cultural patterns or elements. Even though humans share several cultural universals, the practice of culture expresses itself in a variety of ways across different social groups and institutions. When different groups identify **shared culture**, we often are speaking from generalizations or general characteristics and principles shared by humans. The description of cultural universals speak to the generalization of culture such as in the practice of marriage. Different social groups share the institution of marriage but the process, ceremony, and legal commitments are different depending on the culture of the group or society.

Cultural generalities help us understand the similarities and connections all humans have in the way we understand and live even though we may have particular ways of applying them. Some cultural characteristics are unique to a single place, culture, group, or society. These particularities may develop or adapt from social and physical responses to time, geography, ecological changes, group member traits, and composition including power structures or other phenomena.

Cultural and Social Bonds

By living together in society, people "learn specific ways of looking at life" (Henslin 2011:104). Through daily interactions, people construct reality. The construction of reality provides a forum for interpreting experiences in life expressed through culture.

Emile Durkheim ([1893] 1933) believed social bonds hold people together. When people live in small, integrated communities that share common values and beliefs, they develop a shared or **collective consciousness**. Durkheim referred to this type of social integration as **mechanical solidarity** meaning members of the community are all working parts of the group or work in unity creating a sense of togetherness forming a collective identity. In this example, members of the community think and act alike because they have a shared culture and shared experiences from living in remote, close-knit areas.



Figure 4.4.1: Men Working at Night. (CC0 1.0; Pixabay).

As society evolves and communities grow, people become more specialized in the work they do. This specialization leads individuals to work independently in order to contribute to a segment or part of a larger society (Henslin 2011). Durkheim referred to this type of social unity as **organic solidarity** meaning each member of the community has a specific task or place in the group in which they contribute to the overall function of the community that is spatial and culturally diverse. In this example, community members do not necessarily think or act alike but participate by fulfilling their role or tasks as part of the larger group. If members fulfill their parts, then everyone is contributing and exchanging labor or production for the community to function as a whole.

Both mechanical and organic solidarity explain how people cooperate to create and sustain social bonds relative to group size and membership. Each form of solidarity develops its own culture to hold society together and function. However, when society transitions from mechanical to organic solidarity, there is chaos or normlessness. Durkheim referred to this transition as social **anomie** meaning "without law" resulting from a lack of a firm collective consciousness. As people transition from social dependence (mechanical solidarity) to interdependence (organic solidarity), they become isolated and alienated from one another until a redeveloped set of shared norms arise. We see examples of this transition when there are changes in social institutions such as governments, industry, and religion. Transitions to democracy across the continent of Africa have shown countries contending with poverty, illiteracy, militarization, underdevelopment, and monopolization of power, all forms of anomie, as they move from social dependence to interdependence (The National Academic Press 1992).

People develop an understanding about their culture specifically their role and place in society through social interactions. Charles Horton Cooley ([1902] 1964) suggested people develop self and identity through interpersonal interactions such as perceptions, expectations, and judgement of others. Cooley referred to this practice as the **looking glass self**. We imagine how others observe us and we develop ourselves in response to their observations. The concept develops over three phases of interactions. First, we imagine another's response to our behavior or appearance, then we envision their judgment, and lastly we have an emotional response to their judgement influencing our self-image or identity (Griswold 2013). Interpersonal interactions play a significant role in helping us create social bonds and understand our place in society.

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4.5: Improving Intercultural Communication Skills

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the importance of cultural intelligence.
2. Learn about metacognitive CQ.
3. Identify several different ways to create better intercultural interactions.

Become Culturally Intelligent

One of the latest buzz-words in the business world is "cultural intelligence," which was initially introduced to the scholarly community in 2003 by P. Christopher Earley and Soon Ang.[40] In the past decade, a wealth of research has been conducted examining the importance of cultural intelligence during interpersonal interactions with people from other cultures. Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as an "individual's capability to function effectively in situations characterized by cultural diversity."[41]

Four Factors of Cultural Intelligence

In their original study on the topic, Earley and Ang argued that cultural intelligence is based on four distinct factors: cognitive, motivational, metacognitive, and behavioral dimensions. Before continuing, take a minute and complete the Cultural Intelligence Questionnaire in Table 6.4.1

Table 6.4.1 Cultural Intelligence Questionnaire

	Read the following questions and select the answer that corresponds with your perception. Do not be concerned if some of the items appear similar. Please use the scale below to rate the degree to which each statement applies to you 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree
1.	When I am interacting with someone from a differing culture I know when I use my knowledge of that person's culture during our interaction
2.	When I interact with someone from a culture I know nothing about, I have no problem adjusting my perspective of that culture while we talk.
3.	During intercultural interactions I am well aware of the cultural knowledge I utilize.
4.	I always check my knowledge of someone from another culture to ensure that my understanding of their culture is accurate.
5.	During my intercultural interactions I try to be mindful of how my perceptions of someone's culture are either consistent with or differ from reality.
6.	I pride myself on knowing a lot about other people's cultures
7.	I understand the social, economic and political systems of other cultures
8.	I know about other culture's religious beliefs and values
9.	I understand how daily life is enacted in other cultures
10.	I know the importance of paintings, literature and other forms of art in other cultures
11.	I enjoy reaching out and engaging in an intercultural encounter.
12.	I would have no problem in socializing with people from a new culture.
13.	Although intercultural encounters often involve stress I don't mind the stress because meeting people from other cultures makes it worthwhile
14.	I would have no problems accustomising myself to the routines of another culture
15.	I enjoy being with people from other cultures and getting to know them

	Read the following questions and select the answer that corresponds with your perception. Do not be concerned if some of the items appear similar. Please use the scale below to rate the degree to which each statement applies to you 1- Strongly disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree
16.	I know how to interact verbally with people from different cultures.
17.	I know how to interact non-verbally with people from different cultures.
18.	I can vary my rate of speech if an intercultural encounter requires it.
19.	I can easily alter my behaviours to suit the needs of an intercultural encounter.
20.	I can alter my facial expressions if an intercultural exchange requires it
SCORING	To compute your scores follow the instructions below
	Add items 1-5 Intercultural understanding
	Add items 6-10 Intercultural knowledge
	Add items 11-15 Intercultural motivation
	Add items 16-20 Intercultural behavior

Interpretation

Scores for each of the four factors (intercultural understanding, intercultural knowledge, intercultural motivation, and intercultural behavior) can be added together to get a composite score. Each of the four factors exists on a continuum from 5 (not culturally intelligent) to 25 (highly culturally intelligent). An average person would score between 12-18.

Based On:

Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Koh, C. (2008). Development and validation of the CQS: The Cultural Intelligence Scale. In S. Ang & L. Van Dyne (Eds.), Handbook of cultural intelligence: Theory, measurement, and application (pp. 16-38). Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.

Cognitive CQ

First, cognitive CQ involves knowing about different cultures (intercultural knowledge). Many types of knowledge about a culture can be relevant during an intercultural interaction: rules and norms, economic and legal systems, cultural values and beliefs, the importance of art within a society, etc.… All of these different areas of knowledge involve facts that can help you understand people from different cultures. For example, in most of the United States, when you are talking to someone, eye contact is very important. You may have even been told by someone to “look at me when I’m talking to you” if you’ve ever gotten in trouble. However, this isn’t consistent across different cultures at all. Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Native American cultures often view direct contact when talking to someone superior as a sign of disrespect. Knowing how eye contact functions across cultures can help you know more about how to interact with people from various cultures. Probably one of the best books you can read to know more about how to communicate in another culture is Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway’s book *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More than 60 Countries.*[42]

Motivational CQ

Second, we have motivational CQ, or the degree to which an individual desires to engage in intercultural interactions and can easily adapt to different cultural environments. Motivation is the key to effective intercultural interactions. You can have all the knowledge in the world, but if you are not motivated to have successful intercultural interactions, you will not have them.

Metacognitive CQ

Third, metacognitive CQ involves being consciously aware of your intercultural interactions in a manner that helps you have more effective interpersonal experiences with people from differing cultures (intercultural understanding). All of the knowledge about cultural differences in the world will not be beneficial if you cannot use that information to understand and adapt your behavior

during an interpersonal interaction with someone from a differing culture. As such, we must always be learning about cultures but also be ready to adjust our knowledge about people and their cultures through our interactions with them.

Behavioral CQ

Lastly, behavioral CQ is the next step following metacognitive CQ, which is behaving in a manner that is consistent with what you know about other cultures.[43] We should never expect others to adjust to us culturally. Instead, culturally intelligent people realize that it's best to adapt our behaviors (verbally and nonverbally) to bridge the gap between people culturally. When we go out of our way to be culturally intelligent, we will encourage others to do so as well. As you can see, becoming a truly culturally intelligent person involves a lot of work. As such, it's important to spend time and build your cultural intelligence if you are going to be an effective communicator in today's world.

Engaging Culturally Mindful Interactions

Admittedly, being culturally competent takes a lot of work and a lot of practice. Even if you're not completely culturally competent, you can engage with people from other cultures in a mindful way. As discussed in Chapter 1, Shauna Shapiro and Linda Carlson introduced us to the three-component model of mindfulness: attention, intention, and attitude.[44]

First, when it comes to engaging with people from other cultures, we need to be fully in the moment and not think about previous interactions with people from a culture or possible future interactions with people from a culture. Instead, it's essential to focus on the person you are interacting with. You also need to be aware of your stereotypes and prejudices that you may have of people from a different culture. Don't try to find evidence to support or negate these stereotypes or prejudices. If you focus on evidencefinding, you're just trying to satisfy your thoughts and feelings and not mindfully engaging with this other person. Also, if you find that your mind is shifting, recognize the shift and allow yourself to re-center on your interaction with the other person.

Second, go into an intercultural interaction knowing your intention. If your goal is to learn more about that person's culture, that's a great intention. However, that may not be the only intention we have when interacting with someone from another culture. For example, you may be interacting with someone from another culture because you're trying to sell them a product you represent. If your main intention is sales, then be aware of your intention and don't try to deceive yourself into thinking it's something more altruistic.

Lastly, go into all intercultural interactions with the right attitude. Remember, the goal of being mindful is to be open, kind, and curious. Although we often discuss mindful in terms of how we can be open, kind, and curious with ourselves, it's also important to extend that same framework when we are interacting with people from other cultures. So much of mindful relationships is embodying the right attitude during our interactions with others. If you need a refresher on building the right attitude during your interactions, go back and look at Daniel Siegel's COAL Jon Kabat-Zinn's Seven Attitudes for Mindfulness discussed in Chapter 1.

Overall, the goal of mindful intercultural interactions is to be present in the moment in a nonjudgmental way. When you face judgments, recognize them, and ask yourself where they have come from. Interrogate those judgments. At the same time, don't judge yourself for having these ideas. If we have stereotypes about another a specific culture, it's important to recognize those stereotypes, call them out, understand where they came from in the first place, and examine them for factualness.

For example, imagine you're talking to someone from the Republic of Kiribati. Chances are, you've probably never heard of the Republic of Kiribati, but it's a real country in Oceania. But let's say all you know about the people from the Republic of Kiribati is that they like European-style football. During your interaction, you say, "So, what's your favorite football team?" In this moment, you've taken the one stereotype you had and used it to help engage in an interaction. However, if the person comes back and says, "I really don't care. Sports just aren't my thing." How do you respond? First, recognize that you attempted to use a stereotype that you had and call it out for what it was. That doesn't make you a bad person, but we must learn from these encounters and broaden our world views. Second, call out the stereotype in your mind. Before that moment, you may not have even realized that you had a stereotype of people from the Republic of Kiribati. Labeling our stereotypes of other people is important because it helps us recognize them faster, the more we engage in this type of mindful behavior. Third, figure out where that stereotype came from. Maybe you had been in New Zealand and saw a match on the television and saw the Kiribati national football team. In that one moment, you learned a tiny bit about an entire country and pocketed it away for future use. Sometimes it's easy to figure out where our stereotypes evolved from, but sometimes these stereotypes are so ingrained in us through our own culture that it's hard to really figure out their origin. Lastly, it's time to realize that your stereotype may not be that factual. At the same time, you may have found the one resident of the Republic of Kiribati who doesn't like football. We can often make these determinations by talking to the other person.

At the same time, it's important also to be mindfully open to the other person's stereotypes of people within your own culture. For example, someone from the Republic of Kiribati may have a stereotype that Americans know nothing about football (other than American football). If you're a fan of what we in the U.S. call soccer, then you correct that stereotype or at least provide that person a more nuanced understanding of your own culture. Sure, American football still is the king of sports in the U.S., but media trends for watching football (soccer) are growing, and more and more Americans are becoming fans.

Key Takeaways

- Cultural intelligence involves the degree to which an individual can communicate competently in varying cultural situations. Cultural intelligence consists of four distinct parts: knowledge, motivation, understanding, and behavior.
- Having strong intercultural relationships can be very rewarding. When thinking about your own intercultural relationships, some ways to have more rewarding intercultural relationships can include: understanding your own culture better, being interested in other people and their cultures, respecting other people's cultures, becoming culturally intelligent, tolerating ambiguity during interactions, being aware of and overcoming your own ethnocentrism, and being a good example of your own culture.

Exercises

- The Cultural Intelligence Center has created a widely used 20-item measure for cultural intelligence. Please take a second and complete their measure: http:// www.culturalq.com/docs/The%20CQS.pdf What were your CQ strengths and CQ weaknesses? Where would you most want to improve your CQ?
- Visit the National Center for Cultural Competence at http://nccc.georgetown.edu/ about.html. Read some of the material on their website. Look for their ideas and compare to what you've learned in this section.
- James L. Mason created a cultural competence tool for service agencies (http:// files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED399684.pdf). Take a look at their tool, which is freely available online. What do you think of their tools for evaluating cultural competence? Do you think cultural competence and cultural intelligence are similar, different, or identical? Why?

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4.6: Culture and Communication

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Define intercultural communication, including beliefs, values, and norms.
- Discuss co-cultures and how they play a part in intercultural communication.
- Consider 1st order and 2nd order realities and their effect on perception.
- Define cultural practices in different cultures, including context, time, talk, silence, nonverbal communication, and the dimensions of culture.
- Understand how organizational and occupational culture interplay with culture in general.

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

When you think of intercultural communication, perhaps you don't think about the next door neighbor who just moved in from another state, or the person who works as a firefighter when you work in retail. But, these are just a few of the people that you communicate with interculturally. Interpersonal communication, which happens between two people, often has intercultural aspects to it, and there's more to it than just talking with someone while traveling to another country.

First, the big view of culture and communication deals with beliefs, attitudes, values, and norms. Many definitions of culture call for it being a shared belief system, attitudes, values and norms. However, sometimes within a culture, those beliefs, attitudes, values, and norms may be different, and it's still the same culture. Intercultural communication is defined as a symbolic exchange process where people from different cultural communities negotiate shared meaning (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

Part of culture includes beliefs, values, attitudes, and norms, and these are often shared within cultures. **Beliefs** are big. They encompass people's world view, which is the overall way someone views their place in their city, neighborhood, school, friend group, etc. It may include religion, and often does, as religion tends to be a lens through which humans view their world.

Alternatively, the lack of religion could also frame someone's worldview. Two people who are communicating from different world views may have more trouble understanding each other. For instance, one friend who is Hindu and the other friend is an atheist may question how the other gets along in the world, if there is no higher power in the atheist's life, and vice versa, the atheist may be confused by how the Hindu can have many gods.

Values are the learned organization of making choices and resolving conflict, according to Novinger (2001). They are effectively what someone views as morally right or wrong. Most people would agree that murder is wrong, but what people view as murder may not always be the same. For instance, one culture may be against the death penalty, while the next thinks it's fine.

Attitudes include a cognitive layer and an affective layer, with the cognitive layer allowing a person to suspend judgment and be open-minded, and the affective layer allowing the purposeful commitment to perspective-taking and empathy (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012). Attitudes can also be simply feeling positive or negative about something.

These can be changed more easily than something like beliefs or values. For example, if someone doesn't like pizza as a child, but then tries it again with prompting of friends as a teen, and then they do like pizza, the person's attitude about it changed. However, it tends to be more difficult to change something like religious beliefs. If someone grows up being Christian or Hindu, those belief systems and values that come with them tend to stay with a person, and are more ingrained than attitudes.

Then **norms** are what people within a culture have come to understand as the way things are done. For instance, if a family has dinner together, there may be certain things that happen in that process. Perhaps two family members cook together, one person sets the table, everyone talks happily during the meal, and another person cleans up after the family is done. In another family, it may be completely different, with the adults talking while the children look at their phones. The norms in one family are not better or worse; they are different.

Co-cultures are cultures within a larger culture that are differentiated from each other. A group of children in theatre class in middle school comprise a different co-culture than a group of football players. The IT people in a state agency have a different co-culture than the people who work with Medicaid applicants in the same state agency. The people within a generation comprise a co-culture, as do people from a particular ethnicity or race. People who enjoy riding motorcycles are a co-culture. Basically, we are all part of many co-cultures, and part of a larger culture.

Within our own worlds, we observe others. **First-order reality** is what is physically observable, whereas **second-order reality** is attaching meaning to first-order reality. Different people may have different second-order reality. For instance, if a person someone

just met shakes their hand, that's a first-order reality. A second-order reality is that the person has a super-firm handshake that is almost painful and you feel like they want to overpower you. That person's second-order reality is that they admire the person and want to impress them with a firm handshake, and they have been told they have a weak handshake earlier in the day. Two completely different meanings are present, and neither person knows the other person's second-order reality.

Social practices

Geert Hofstede, a noted culture researcher, used the metaphor that your own culture is like the air you breathe, whereas another culture is like water, and you can survive in both, but you must learn to survive in the second one by using tools (2010).

There are several dimensions of culture we use, including **high context** and **low context**. Hall (1976) coined these terms, in which high context means the information conveyed is mostly within the person, whereas in low context, the information conveyed is in explicit code. This means a home loan, with all its many pages of documents to sign, is low-context, coded in language specific to the process, whereas your best friend's stricken expression as she's lost her 15-year-old pet is high context communication. You can do both, but each is necessary in different situations.

Time is valued and perceived differently in different cultures. In Germany, for instance, trains run like clockwork, and in the United States, school schedules are by the minute. At one Texas middle school, school begins at 8:45 a.m., students have precisely seven minutes between classes, and school releases at 4:05 p.m. In Mexico, when someone says to meet at 8 p.m. to go to dinner, it could be 9 or 9:30 by the time people actually arrive. None of these situations are seen as good or bad within their own cultures, but they could promote miscommunication within people from different cultures.

Within cultures, there are different values placed on talk and silence. In the United States, there is a tendency to think talk is highly valued, and that silence means there is something wrong. For instance, there is the dreaded "silent treatment" in interpersonal relationships, where someone isn't talking to the other person in order to punish that person. However, contradictorily, there is also what's labeled a comfortable silence, in which two people can simply be together without talking and there is no issue.

Talk seems to be valued more in the United States than in some other places. For instance, Zimmermann and Morgan indicate there is a lot of pressure to express yourself in Western culture, but perhaps we should " think about silence, solitude, and contemplation and the role they might play in restoring personal understanding of the *Self* and of authentic experience of the *Other* through reflective learning" (2016, p. 400). Some Native American people like the Apaches, value silence, as do the French (with people they don't know), and because people from the United States who are not Native Americans value talk, miscommunication may happen frequently (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012).

Nonverbal communication permeates all of communication, and is truly inescapable, even sometimes with someone's absence. In nonverbal communication, there are factors of facial expression, touch, artifacts, use of time, gestures, tone, volume, choice of clothing, hairstyle, or makeup. All of these determine impressions, and may be misinterpreted.

Even the six universal facial expressions, surprise, disgust, fear, anger, happiness, and sadness, are not always supported interculturally (Jack, Garrod, Yu, Caldara, & Schyns, 2012). Just the clothing you're wearing may tell someone about your personality and culture. While it may be tempting to draw conclusions about someone from their nonverbal communication, ethical communicators work hard to avoid assumptions.

Knowing Hofstede's Dimensions will help in adapting to your audience in interpersonal communication when you are communicating with someone of a different culture, co-culture, or international culture. **Individualism** and **collectivism** are two dimensions that indicate whether someone is more concerned about themselves and their immediate family as opposed to the group. Culturally, people from the United States, Germany, Ireland, South Africa, and Australia are high on the individualism spectrum, while people from countries such as Japan, China, Korea, Venezuela, Guatemala, Indonesia, Argentina, Brazil, Nigeria, and India are seen as collectivist.

Uncertainty avoidance is the degree to which people do not like uncertainty. In some cultures, people are fine with vague details, while high uncertainty avoidance cultures include people who want to know what's going to happen, with whom, when, and how.

Power distance relates to how people view people who are more powerful than they are. For instance, think about being on a first-name basis with your boss or parents? This may mean you are a low-power distance person, whereas if you call your boss Ms. Ramirez, you may have a higher power distance.

Masculinity and **femininity** are also cultural dimensions, in which masculine cultures have different expectations for men and women, and feminine cultures have more fluid gender roles. This can vary within households as well. The concepts of masculinity

and femininity are socially constructed concepts, which means there are in-betweens, and these binary stereotypes exist as part of a continuum, which is discussed more in an upcoming unit on gender.

Long-term and **short-term orientation** is another dimension, where long-term means people are interested in what will happen over a longer period of time, and preparations are made for careers, education, and family life, whereas cultures with a short-term orientation tend to focus on the now, and even the past, with tradition being at the forefront.

Organizational culture

Beliefs, values, and norms within organizational culture may be a bit different than within the social culture. People in general, organize, but what we are considering organizational culture here is some type of organization where there is a purpose, and a culture emerges from it. For instance, a college has an organizational culture. A restaurant has an organizational culture. A retail store and its employees have an organizational culture.

Take a restaurant, Cheesecake Factory. It has an organizational culture, as all its employees dress the same, there is a giant, multi-multi-page menu, and birthdays are celebrated. The decor is expansive, with tall ceilings, and columns with woodwork.

All of these things tell us something about the organizational culture. What people may take away from these artifacts would be that the restaurant wants to convey opulence and fine dining, as opposed to many of the casual restaurants that exist. They take the service and the quality of the food very seriously, and it shows in the décor.

There are also rites and rituals that happen, both between employees, and with guests. One ritual might be a particular way orders are taken, or in a retail store, when new employees are told they must act out "I'm a Little Teapot" prior to their first shift. Stories are told between employees, and there may be myths and legends about that long-term food server who stayed for years, and the manager who saved the day when the electricity went out. All of these contribute to the communication climate of the organization. If you walk into an organization and everyone has a disgusted look on their faces, it may appear to have a negative communication climate, which could affect whether you want to work there at all.

Artifacts in an organizational culture might be the art that is on the wall, or the types of plates that are used for guests. It may also be, in an educational institution, what types of tables and chairs the students sit in, as opposed to the instructors.

Occupational culture comprises people who are working in the same field, and may be part of a separate organization, or they may be working in the same organization (Trice & Beyer, 1993). Like other subcultures, they may have frequent social interaction, shared experiences, and similar personal characteristics, all of which lend themselves toward cohesion (Trice & Beyer, 1993). An occupation can span multiple organizations, and there is often a culture permeating a particular occupation.

For instance, people working in the restaurant industry will have shared experience of terms they use, like "two-top" meaning a table for two, and "86" meaning leave out, and will be able to share discussions about customers, managers, and more. Another example is of firefighters, who share a culture as well, and others may feel left out because they do not have that knowledge and experience.

People in the military immediately have a shared connection in which they discuss where they've been, what branch, and what their jobs were. In the information technology field, there is a shared experience, and many people in the field have a savior mentality, in which they are seen as the people who can fix everything when something goes wrong. It's also a culture in which there is a high male population.

It's important to think about occupational culture when communicating interpersonally, as occupations can shape our experiences sometimes even more than workplaces themselves. The saying "life's work" comes from the choice of an occupation, after all, and serves to help people form an identity.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Your Co-Cultures

Talk to a friend about co-cultures. What co-cultures do you share, and what co-cultures are each of you in that the other didn't know about? How might you get to know more about your friend? How did you get drawn together? How do you keep the relationship going?

Activity 2: Occupational Culture Analysis

Ask a parent or older adult about their occupation. What are some of the characteristics the person feels are shared within the occupation? Ask about beliefs, values, and attitudes within the occupational culture. What about the occupation you hope to have?

Analyze what that culture might be like, and how it might change in the future due to technology in a blog post.

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GLOSSARY

Attitudes: Somewhat settled way of viewing a concept or thing, can be changed with persuasion

Beliefs: Worldviews of people within a culture, often relating to religion

Co-cultures: Cultures within a larger culture that are differentiated from each other

Dimensions of culture: Dichotomous ideas put forth by Hofstede to describe and put cultures along a continuum to describe them, i.e. individualism/collectivism, long-term/short-term orientation

First-order reality: What is physically observable

Norms: The way things are done within a culture

Occupational culture: Shared beliefs, values and attitudes within a work field, like firefighting, or academia

Organizational culture: Shared beliefs, values and attitudes within a group, like a business, nonprofit, children's team

Second-order reality: Attaching meaning to first-order reality

Values: Learned organization of making choices and resolving conflict

MEDIA

Multimedia 1: When watching the following video, notice all of the stereotypes people who are native to Alaska face, and think about how you'd approach a conversation with someone from the area. Try to consider the situation from another perspective.

What People Get Wrong About Alaska Natives: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lDU4PkSqWsQ

Multimedia 2: In this segment, a social ethicist discusses going to an African American community support group for people with diabetes. She talks about a more collectivist view of health in this community.

African American health, faith beliefs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnfkiMv0At0

Multimedia 3: Miles Best talks to an author about Black culture, and how it is American culture. Language is discussed, as well as other parts of Black culture.

Black culture in the United States: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmdE_FlSfig

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4.7: Cross-Cultural Communication

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Practice cross-cultural communication through communication competence.
- Understand how to learn about cultures.
- Discuss international cultures co-existing within communities.
- Analyze problems within cross-cultural communication.
- Understand cultural issues and perception within multiple types of relationships.
- Understand the effect of age, generation, race, gender, and disability in cultural communication.

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Communicating across cultures

When people from different cultures communicate, this is cross-cultural communication. This can be people from different families, different occupations, different races, ages, and genders. It can also be cross-cultural communication when two people are from different countries.

What is needed in cross-cultural communication is competence, and this comes partially from having an open mind. Critical thinking is necessary to ascertain what these differences are, and how to get the point across in a different way, or at least be able to explain the why. Chung notes the rapidly changing demographics in the United States, saying, “what was once a homogeneous community, we may now find more diversity and cultural values in flux” and that we learn more from people who are different than people who are similar (2019, p. 376). There’s value in diversity.

An example of cross-cultural communication is when a couple comes together and they are from different cultures, i.e. a person from Houston, Texas, gets together with another person from near Houston, Texas, but who is originally from Lima, Peru, by way of Brazil. There may be a nuanced language barrier, or a difference in food expectations, and a difference in expected dinner times. These partners may have the same religion, and so there is that in common.

But, families communicate differently, so they must negotiate their norms nonverbally and verbally. For instance, the Peruvian hugs and has more communication through touch. There may be differences in expectations for how to raise children, household chores, and who works and who doesn’t. There may also be questions if there is a lack of competence of one or both of the people involved. The initial attraction may be physical, but there would be a lot of interpretation going on in actions.

Competence and cultural learning

How we learn about other cultures may improve our competence level. Many people will simply begin to ask questions, or may do research on the particular culture of the person. Knowing that the research is about a group of people should be telling, as all people from within a culture will not be the same. However, reaching out shows outreach.

Food is a great way to find out about a culture, and the treatment of food. Many families in the United States rarely have dinner together, and instead fend for themselves, while other families insist upon a family dinner at one table with no electronics every night. Some people will want everyone to eat all the food, where some people will want some food to be left on the plate. This is something that must be learned.

Within communities, there may be many people from different countries, and there is a need to learn the norms. Consider a real estate agent who is a white woman from Texas and who is invited to a client’s baby shower. The client is from Nigeria, and the real estate agent budgeted only 45 minutes of time for the shower. The real estate agent showed up at the designated time, was there for almost two hours. The client showed up right as she was leaving. The real estate agent was confused, but hadn’t researched the culture. Time is viewed differently within the Nigerian culture, but the agent didn’t realize that would apply in the United States. However, with many Nigerian people at the party, the time standard was not typical U.S. time orientation.

Knowing our audience is important, so we become more competent. The best intercultural communicators are people who are genuinely interested in other cultures.

Problems in cross-cultural communication

Biases

Problems in cross-cultural communication can be stereotyping, ethnocentrism, prejudice, discrimination, and racism. **Stereotyping**, according to Hall, is "attributions that cover up individual differences and ascribe certain characteristics to an entire group of people" (2005, p. 192). An example might be that Asians are good at math. While this may be a positive stereotype, it's still not correct to use, whether it's positive or negative.

Ethnocentrism is "assuming that one's group is the center of the world" and feelings of superiority (Hall, 2005, p. 198). Though ethnocentrism may not be meant to be negative, it shows a lack of critical thinking, and thinking outside the culture. The real estate agent from our earlier example who attended her Nigerian friend's baby shower could have made the mistake of telling her friend that it's better to have an exact start time for an event, but instead, the agent went along with the uncertainty even if it made the agent feel a bit out of her comfort zone.

Prejudice is "a rigid attitude that's (1) based on group membership and (2) predisposes an individual to feel, think, or act in a negative way toward another person or group of persons." (Hall, 2005, p. 202). Prejudice is always negative. **Discrimination** is acting negatively based on prejudice, while **racism** is discrimination or prejudice directed at someone of a different race because of the notion that one's own race is superior. These get progressively more negative and harmful.

Rockson (2019) writes a primer on how to connect with others through cross-cultural communication, and suggests that people need to be aware of their own values and biases, as that helps prevent missteps and bad relationships. Rockson's (2019) book suggests the solution is to educate, don't perpetuate, and instead, communicate.

Relationships

On the positive side, cross-cultural relationships often develop. Relationships have many variations: strangers, acquaintances, friends, romantic partners, and family. The way all these relationships are valued varies between cultures. For instance, the elderly population of some cultures is treated differently than in other cultures, like Japan versus the United States. In Japan, 58% of elderly people are likely to live with one of their children, while in the United States, 15% of elderly people live with someone else, and Japanese elders are seen to have more wisdom and are listened to with reverence and seen as relevant (Karasawa, 2011).

Family relationships tend to be nuclear in the United States, though the saying "blood is thicker than water" has been heard in the country. This saying means that family relationships are more valued than other relationships. Within families, relationships within collectivist countries like Japan tend toward family members sticking with extended family members, even to the point of living in the same households.

When people immigrate to the United States, the tradition of extended family living together often carries over. For instance, Indian families often have multiple generations living together, as do Hispanic families from collectivist cultures. As economies change, these things may tend to change as well.

Within the United States, the culture of friendliness with strangers varies. In Southern states, there tends to be an air of friendliness, and strangers will help each other out, and go out of their way to do nice things, whereas in northern states, or larger cities, like New York City, people are not as conversational, and may not consider others as much. Neither is good or bad, they just are.

Acquaintances within cross-cultural relationships often co-exist, like one street in Houston, where there was a large Catholic family with five children, next door to a lesbian couple with two children, a black family with children, a couple with no children, an Indian family, and an Asian family. This particular community touted itself as the most international community in the world, and everyone coexisted, but no one seemed to truly involve themselves in each other's lives.

With cross-cultural friends, more of an effort is made to reach out and maintain. With cross-cultural relationships, there may be a more difficult time understanding each other's world views, but the variations in ethnicities, race, religion, and more can make things more interesting. An example would be a friendship in which one friend is an atheist, whereas the other is an evangelical Christian, or a friendship where one person is Catholic and the other person is Hindu. Even with that religious difference, it can be a learning opportunity.

Romantic partners may have the hardest time of all of these within cross-cultural relationships. Romantic partners of different backgrounds may need the goodwill or acceptance of their extended families, and sometimes may not receive it. For instance, an Indian-American Hindu woman marrying a Bangladeshi-born American Muslim man might encounter resistance from their families, but might persist. Or, the families could intervene and question them.

The video Working with Cross-Cultural Couples (2018) includes an example of an African American woman who married a West African Muslim man, and found that she had more in common with a white man from Colorado than she did with her own

husband, though she and her husband both had similar skin tone. She experienced being called a “black white wife” by her husband’s family, as she is American. The video noted that the couple stayed married despite these issues.

The earlier Peruvian-American who married the several-generation Texan didn’t encounter reservations from family, but both encountered some need to be mindful about their respective families and expectations. For instance, the Peruvian mother-in-law moved to the house on the next street over, but maintained some distance instead of moving right into the couple’s house. The white Texan man learned to be more physically affectionate with the Peruvian in-laws, as is the norm.

Affection may be experienced differently within cross-cultural couples, and decisions need to be made about language and children, religion, and naming, and all of these things that may be negotiated along the way.

Improving cross-cultural relationships

When it comes to improving cross-cultural relationships, think about differences and similarities, and how those may cause both people within a relationship to react. Age and generational differences show up in family relationships, as an example, teenage children and their parents or grandparents may have differences of opinion.

They may place importance on different notions as well. Note, the “OK, Boomer” phenomenon from 2019. This phrase is used whenever younger people want to ignore or dismiss something a person of an older generation says. In current U.S. culture, there are several generations, starting with Generation Z, people who are currently very young up to about age 19 or so. These are people who have grown up with technology, unless their parents forbade it. Millennials, or Generation Y, are currently the young adults, on up to the late 30s. While they didn’t start out with technology, they’ve used it most of their lives, and it’s permeated their view of the world.

Generation X, or what was known as they were coming of age as the ‘Slacker Generation,’ is the generation in their 40s to early 50s currently. They are at the peak of their careers, and have learned to integrate technology into their lives. The Boomer generation is currently in their later 50s to early 70s, and they are retiring or continuing to work. The generation known as the Greatest Generation is aging, and definitely did not grow up with technology, but they are living longer than the generations before them. Age can be a factor in relating to people interpersonally, so think about topics of conversation and examples that are used, as those will vary greatly between generations.

People who are older will have different wording for dating, such as calling someone a beau or boyfriend, or will say, “are you going with someone?” or they may use the word “courting.” Teens will say, “I’m dating someone” or if it’s not “official” then “talking to someone.”

Racial differences also play a part of communication. What is important to think about with race relations is that race is still a big factor in many people’s minds, and it’s been in the news a lot lately. Sometimes people don’t communicate with people of different races because they haven’t experienced such friendships before, and so there is uncertainty.

Talk with people from different backgrounds, and ask about experiences. With people who are of different backgrounds, listen and then believe their experience, and understand privilege. Even things as simple as the emoji for a thumbs up tends to be first in a white skin tone, but brown skin tone emojis exist as well.

When you are within a culture, sometimes you may not notice these things, but take a look around. Seek out experience, and learn. Know that bias can creep into conversations, but understand that, apologize for it, and make a commitment to change behaviors.

Gender roles in different cultures may be unknown, and may be more pronounced, as discussed earlier in the masculine and feminine culture section. Think critically about the gender roles, and what you may see in others. Just because a woman takes on more traditionally feminine roles in a relationship doesn’t mean it’s bad, unless she doesn’t want to do those roles. An example is a new heterosexual couple watching a romantic movie for the first time together, and the male cries and the female doesn’t. Is this outside of what is seen as the norm? Perhaps, but is it wrong? Nope. Self-expression can come in different modes for people.

Disability as a factor in relationships can affect interpersonal communication. People with disabilities should be addressed as you would address anyone else. If someone has cerebral palsy, and uses a wheelchair and has an attendant with them to help facilitate communication, when you converse with the person, make eye contact with the person with the disability, not the attendant.

When someone with Down syndrome is ordering food at a restaurant, ask them what they want, not the other people they are with. Expect people with a disability to be able to function independently, until they ask for help. One time, a 10-year-old boy with Down syndrome surprised his parents by climbing out a window to go sit on the roof. They realized what he’d done, and knew to mitigate for that in the future, but learned that he could figure out how to do things they never imagined.

When someone who is blind is walking down the hall, don't grab their arm to guide them. Rather, if it appears they could need help, ask if they need help. With a deaf person, make lots of eye contact, and feel free to write something down on paper if other ways of communicating aren't working. Sign language interpreters often help in larger-group situations. If you know the person, try to learn American Sign Language (if that is what the person uses).

There are many different types of disabilities, including physical, developmental, intellectual, and learning disabilities. Sometimes people have a combination of these disabilities. People appreciate effort to communicate with them, and relationships with people with disabilities can be extremely rewarding for all involved. Chances are, all people have encountered someone with a disability in their educational journey.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Ethnocentrism and Mobility

Read the article "The Inevitability of Ethnocentrism Revisited: Ethnocentrism Diminishes As Mobility Increases," located at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4672305/. What does the article say about in-group and out-groups? How does mobility reduce out-group hostility? Does traveling help reduce ethnocentrism?

Activity 2: American Dream Quiz

A recent quiz was created about privilege to determine how many roadblocks people have encountered on their search for the American Dream. Do the quiz, located at https://movingupusa.com/calc/. What was your score, and were you surprised? How many of the things that you consider roadblocks have been within your control?

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GLOSSARY

Discrimination: Treating someone differently because of characteristics such as race, age, or sex

Ethnocentrism: Thinking one's own way of thinking or being is superior, without considering that it is negative, because of the difficulty of getting out of one's own culture

Prejudice: Being negatively biased against someone because of characteristics such as race, age, or sex

Racism: Prejudice based on the belief that a person's own race is superior

Stereotyping: Attributing generalized characteristics to an entire group of people

MEDIA

Multimedia 1: An intercultural couple discusses how they negotiate cultural differences. Particularly, a Japanese man and a white U.S. American woman discuss their differences.

What we argue about | Japanese/American marriage https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0reQCDL968

Multimedia 2: Comedian and news anchor Trevor Noah discusses trying a taco for the first time. More importantly, look at the misunderstanding that happens in the use of language in the clip. Think about whether you may have had misunderstandings like these with friends from other cultures.

Trevor Noah: That's Racist - Tacos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDk5ajNDgZc&list=TLPQMTEwMTIwMjBTkibtm_xuXQ&index=2

Multimedia 3: Biracial actresses from Sister, Sister discuss their marriages. One of the twins is married to an African American man, and the other is married to a white man. Think about your own experience with interracial couples, or even your own experience being part of an interracial couple. How do you react when you hear such things? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngwvHYqYGS0

Multimedia 4: Observe the following clip to see how different cultures view cultural appropriation. How will you react differently, if at all, to costumes in the future?

My Culture is NOT a Costume: Cultural Appropriation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6Y5cARFJw8

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4.8: Foundations of Culture and Identity

Learning Objectives

1. Define culture.
2. Define personal, social, and cultural identities.
3. Summarize nondominant and dominant identity development.
4. Explain why difference matters in the study of culture and identity.

Culture is a complicated word to define, as there are at least six common ways that culture is used in the United States. For the purposes of exploring the communicative aspects of culture, we will define culture as the ongoing negotiation of learned and patterned beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors. Unpacking the definition, we can see that culture shouldn't be conceptualized as stable and unchanging. Culture is "negotiated," and as we will learn later in this chapter, culture is dynamic, and cultural changes can be traced and analyzed to better understand why our society is the way it is. The definition also points out that culture is learned, which accounts for the importance of socializing institutions like family, school, peers, and the media. Culture is patterned in that there are recognizable widespread similarities among people within a cultural group. There is also deviation from and resistance to those patterns by individuals and subgroups within a culture, which is why cultural patterns change over time. Last, the definition acknowledges that culture influences our beliefs about what is true and false, our attitudes including our likes and dislikes, our values regarding what is right and wrong, and our behaviors. It is from these cultural influences that our identities are formed.

Personal, Social, and Cultural Identities

Ask yourself the question "Who am I?" Recall from our earlier discussion of self-concept that we develop a sense of who we are based on what is reflected back on us from other people. Our parents, friends, teachers, and the media help shape our identities. While this happens from birth, most people in Western societies reach a stage in adolescence where maturing cognitive abilities and increased social awareness lead them to begin to reflect on who they are. This begins a lifelong process of thinking about who we are now, who we were before, and who we will become (Tatum, B. D., 2000). Our identities make up an important part of our self-concept and can be broken down into three main categories: personal, social, and cultural identities (see Table 8.1 "Personal, Social, and Cultural Identities").

We must avoid the temptation to think of our identities as constant. Instead, our identities are formed through processes that started before we were born and will continue after we are gone; therefore our identities aren't something we achieve or complete. Two related but distinct components of our identities are our personal and social identities (Spreckels, J. & Kotthoff, H., 2009). Personal identities include the components of self that are primarily intrapersonal and connected to our life experiences. For example, I consider myself a puzzle lover, and you may identify as a fan of hip-hop music. Our social identities are the components of self that are derived from involvement in social groups with which we are interpersonally committed.



Figure 4.8.1: Pledging a fraternity or sorority is an example of a social identity. Adaenn – CC BY-NC 2.0.

For example, we may derive aspects of our social identity from our family or from a community of fans for a sports team. Social identities differ from personal identities because they are externally organized through membership. Our membership may be voluntary (Greek organization on campus) or involuntary (family) and explicit (we pay dues to our labor union) or implicit (we purchase and listen to hip-hop music). There are innumerous options for personal and social identities. While our personal identity choices express who we are, our social identities align us with particular groups. Through our social identities, we make statements about who we are and who we are not.

Table 4.8.1: Personal, Social, and Cultural Identities

Personal	Social	Cultural
Antique Collector	Member of Historical Society	Irish American
Dog Lover	Member of Humane Society	Male/Female
Cyclist	Fraternity/Sorority Member	Greek American
Singer	High School Music Teacher	Multiracial
Shy	Book Club Member	Heterosexual
Athletic		Gay/Lesbian

Personal identities may change often as people have new experiences and develop new interests and hobbies. A current interest in online video games may give way to an interest in graphic design. Social identities do not change as often because they take more time to develop, as you must become interpersonally invested. For example, if an interest in online video games leads someone to become a member of a MMORPG, or a massively multiplayer online role-playing game community, that personal identity has led to a social identity that is now interpersonal and more entrenched. Cultural identities are based on socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for social behavior or ways of acting (Yep, G. A., 2002). Since we are often a part of them since birth, cultural identities are the least changeable of the three. The ways of being and the social expectations for behavior within cultural identities do change over time, but what separates them from most social identities is their historical roots (Collier, M. J., 1996). For example, think of how ways of being and acting have changed for African Americans since the civil rights movement. Additionally, common ways of being and acting within a cultural identity group are expressed through communication. In order to be accepted as a member of a cultural group, members must be acculturated, essentially learning and using a code that other group members will be able to recognize. We are acculturated into our various cultural identities in obvious and less obvious ways. We may literally have a parent or friend tell us what it means to be a man or a woman. We may also unconsciously consume messages from popular culture that offer representations of gender.

Any of these identity types can be ascribed or avowed. Ascribed identities are personal, social, or cultural identities that are placed on us by others, while avowed identities are those that we claim for ourselves (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Sometimes people ascribe an identity to someone else based on stereotypes. You may see a person who likes to read science-fiction books, watches documentaries, has glasses, and collects Star Trek memorabilia and label him or her a nerd. If the person doesn't avow that identity, it can create friction, and that label may even hurt the other person's feelings. But ascribed and avowed identities can match up. To extend the previous example, there has been a movement in recent years to reclaim the label *nerd* and turn it into a positive, and a nerd subculture has been growing in popularity. For example, MC Frontalot, a leader in the nerdcore hip-hop movement, says that being branded a nerd in school was terrible, but now he raps about "nerdy" things like blogs to sold-out crowds (Shipman, 2007). We can see from this example that our ascribed and avowed identities change over the course of our lives, and sometimes they match up and sometimes not.

Although some identities are essentially permanent, the degree to which we are aware of them, also known as salience, changes. The intensity with which we avow an identity also changes based on context. For example, an African American may not have difficulty deciding which box to check on the demographic section of a survey. But if an African American becomes president of her college's Black Student Union, she may more intensely avow her African American identity, which has now become more salient. If she studies abroad in Africa her junior year, she may be ascribed an identity of American by her new African friends rather than African American. For the Africans, their visitor's identity as American is likely more salient than her identity as someone of African descent. If someone is biracial or multiracial, they may change their racial identification as they engage in an identity search. One intercultural communication scholar writes of his experiences as an "Asianlatinoamerican" (Yep, 2002). He notes repressing his Chinese identity as an adolescent living in Peru and then later embracing his Chinese identity and learning about his family history while in college in the United States. This example shows how even national identity fluctuates. Obviously one can change nationality by becoming a citizen of another country, although most people do not. My identity as a US American became very salient for me for the first time in my life when I studied abroad in Sweden.

Throughout modern history, cultural and social influences have established dominant and nondominant groups (Allen, 2011). Dominant identities historically had and currently have more resources and influence, while nondominant identities historically had and currently have less resources and influence. It's important to remember that these distinctions are being made at the societal level, not the individual level. There are obviously exceptions, with people in groups considered nondominant obtaining more resources and power than a person in a dominant group. However, the overall trend is that difference based on cultural groups has been institutionalized, and exceptions do not change this fact. Because of this uneven distribution of resources and power, members of dominant groups are granted privileges while nondominant groups are at a disadvantage. The main nondominant groups must face various forms of institutionalized discrimination, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism. As we will discuss later, privilege and disadvantage, like similarity and difference, are not "all or nothing." No two people are completely different or completely similar, and no one person is completely privileged or completely disadvantaged.

Identity Development

There are multiple models for examining identity development. Given our focus on how difference matters, we will examine similarities and differences in nondominant and dominant identity formation. While the stages in this model help us understand how many people experience their identities, identity development is complex, and there may be variations. We must also remember that people have multiple identities that intersect with each other. So, as you read, think about how circumstances may be different for an individual with multiple nondominant and/or dominant identities.

Nondominant Identity Development

There are four stages of nondominant identity development (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The first stage is unexamined identity, which is characterized by a lack of awareness of or lack of interest in one's identity. For example, a young woman who will later identify as a lesbian may not yet realize that a nondominant sexual orientation is part of her identity. Also, a young African American man may question his teachers or parents about the value of what he's learning during Black History Month. When a person's lack of interest in their own identity is replaced by an investment in a dominant group's identity, they may move to the next stage, which is conformity.

In the conformity stage, an individual internalizes or adopts the values and norms of the dominant group, often in an effort not to be perceived as different. Individuals may attempt to assimilate into the dominant culture by changing their appearance, their mannerisms, the way they talk, or even their name. Moises, a Chicano man interviewed in a research project about identities, narrated how he changed his "Mexican sounding" name to Moses, which was easier for his middle-school classmates and teachers

to say (Jones Jr., 2009). He also identified as white instead of Mexican American or Chicano because he saw how his teachers treated the other kids with "brown skin." Additionally, some gay or lesbian people in this stage of identity development may try to "act straight." In either case, some people move to the next stage, resistance and separation, when they realize that despite their efforts they are still perceived as different by and not included in the dominant group.

In the resistance and separation stage, an individual with a nondominant identity may shift away from the conformity of the previous stage to engage in actions that challenge the dominant identity group. Individuals in this stage may also actively try to separate themselves from the dominant group, interacting only with those who share their nondominant identity. For example, there has been a Deaf culture movement in the United States for decades. This movement includes people who are hearing impaired and believe that their use of a specific language, **American Sign Language (ASL)**, and other cultural practices constitutes a unique culture, which they symbolize by capitalizing the *D* in *Deaf* (Allen, 2011).

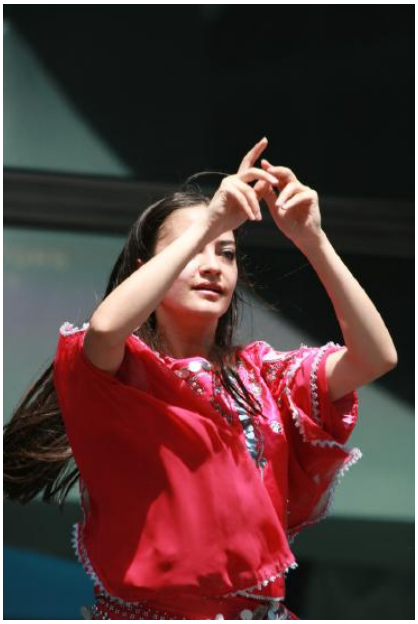


Figure 4.8.2: Many hearing-impaired people in the United States use American Sign Language (ASL), which is recognized as an official language. Quinn Dombrowski – ASL interpreter – CC BY-SA 2.0.

While this is not a separatist movement, a person who is hearing impaired may find refuge in such a group after experiencing discrimination from hearing people. Staying in this stage may indicate a lack of critical thinking if a person endorses the values of the nondominant group without question.

The integration stage marks a period where individuals with a nondominant identity have achieved a balance between embracing their own identities and valuing other dominant and nondominant identities. Although there may still be residual anger from the discrimination and prejudice they have faced, they may direct this energy into positive outlets such as working to end discrimination for their own or other groups. Moises, the Chicano man I mentioned earlier, now works to support the Chicano community in his city and also has actively supported gay rights and women's rights.

Dominant Identity Development

Dominant identity development consists of five stages (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). The unexamined stage of dominant identity formation is similar to nondominant in that individuals in this stage do not think about their or others' identities. Although they may be aware of differences—for example, between races and genders—they either don't realize there is a hierarchy that treats some people differently than others or they don't think the hierarchy applies to them. For example, a white person may take notice that a person of color was elected to a prominent office. However, he or she may not see the underlying reason that it is noticeable—namely, that the overwhelming majority of our country's leaders are white. Unlike people with a nondominant identity who usually have to acknowledge the positioning of their identity due to discrimination and prejudice they encounter, people with dominant identities may stay in the unexamined stage for a long time.

In the acceptance stage, a person with a dominant identity passively or actively accepts that some people are treated differently than others but doesn't do anything internally or externally to address it. In the passive acceptance stage, we must be cautious not to

blame individuals with dominant identities for internalizing racist, sexist, or heterosexist "norms." The socializing institutions we discussed earlier (family, peers, media, religion, and education) often make oppression seem normal and natural. For example, I have had students who struggle to see that they are in this stage say things like "I know that racism exists, but my parents taught me to be a good person and see everyone as equal." While this is admirable, seeing everyone as equal doesn't make it so. And people who insist that we are all equal may claim that minorities are exaggerating their circumstances or "whining" and just need to "work harder" or "get over it." The person making these statements acknowledges difference but doesn't see their privilege or the institutional perpetuation of various "-isms." Although I've encountered many more people in the passive state of acceptance than the active state, some may progress to an active state where they acknowledge inequality and are proud to be in the "superior" group. In either case, many people never progress from this stage. If they do, it's usually because of repeated encounters with individuals or situations that challenge their acceptance of the status quo, such as befriending someone from a nondominant group or taking a course related to culture.

The resistance stage of dominant identity formation is a major change from the previous in that an individual acknowledges the unearned advantages they are given and feels guilt or shame about it. Having taught about various types of privilege for years, I've encountered many students who want to return their privilege or disown it. These individuals may begin to disassociate with their own dominant group because they feel like a curtain has been opened and their awareness of the inequality makes it difficult for them to interact with others in their dominant group. But it's important to acknowledge that becoming aware of your white privilege, for instance, doesn't mean that every person of color is going to want to accept you as an ally, so retreating to them may not be the most productive move. While moving to this step is a marked improvement in regards to becoming a more aware and socially just person, getting stuck in the resistance stage isn't productive, because people are often retreating rather than trying to address injustice. For some, deciding to share what they've learned with others who share their dominant identity moves them to the next stage.

People in the redefinition stage revise negative views of their identity held in the previous stage and begin to acknowledge their privilege and try to use the power they are granted to work for social justice. They realize that they can claim their dominant identity as heterosexual, able-bodied, male, white, and so on, and perform their identity in ways that counter norms. A male participant in a research project on identity said the following about redefining his male identity:

I don't want to assert my maleness the same way that maleness is asserted all around us all the time. I don't want to contribute to sexism. So I have to be conscious of that. There's that guilt. But then, I try to utilize my maleness in positive ways, like when I'm talking to other men about male privilege (Jones, Jr., 2009).

The final stage of dominant identity formation is integration. This stage is reached when redefinition is complete and people can integrate their dominant identity into all aspects of their life, finding opportunities to educate others about privilege while also being a responsive ally to people in nondominant identities. As an example, some heterosexual people who find out a friend or family member is gay or lesbian may have to confront their dominant heterosexual identity for the first time, which may lead them through these various stages. As a sign of integration, some may join an organization like PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), where they can be around others who share their dominant identity as heterosexuals but also empathize with their loved ones.



Figure 4.8.3: Heterosexual people with gay family members or friends may join the group PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) as a part of the redefinition and/or integration stage of their dominant identity development. Jason Riedy – Atlanta Pride Festival parade – CC BY 2.0.

Knowing more about various types of identities and some common experiences of how dominant and nondominant identities are formed prepares us to delve into more specifics about why difference matters.

Difference Matters

Whenever we encounter someone, we notice similarities and differences. While both are important, it is often the differences that are highlighted and that contribute to communication troubles. We don't only see similarities and differences on an individual level. In fact, we also place people into in-groups and out-groups based on the similarities and differences we perceive. This is important because we then tend to react to someone we perceive as a member of an out-group based on the characteristics we attach to the group rather than the individual (Allen, 2011). In these situations, it is more likely that stereotypes and prejudice will influence our communication. Learning about difference and why it matters will help us be more competent communicators. The flip side of emphasizing difference is to claim that no differences exist and that you see everyone as a human being. Rather than trying to ignore difference and see each person as a unique individual, we should know the history of how differences came to be so socially and culturally significant and how they continue to affect us today.

Culture and identity are complex. You may be wondering how some groups came to be dominant and others nondominant. These differences are not natural, which can be seen as we unpack how various identities have changed over time in the next section. There is, however, an ideology of domination that makes it seem natural and normal to many that some people or groups will always have power over others (Allen, 2011). In fact, hierarchy and domination, although prevalent throughout modern human history, were likely not the norm among early humans. So one of the first reasons difference matters is that people and groups are treated unequally, and better understanding how those differences came to be can help us create a more just society. Difference also matters because demographics and patterns of interaction are changing.

In the United States, the population of people of color is increasing and diversifying, and visibility for people who are gay or lesbian and people with disabilities has also increased. The 2010 Census shows that the Hispanic and Latino/a populations in the United States are now the second largest group in the country, having grown 43 percent since the last census in 2000 (Saenz, 2011). By 2030, racial and ethnic minorities will account for one-third of the population (Allen, 2011). Additionally, legal and social changes have created a more open environment for sexual minorities and people with disabilities. These changes directly affect our interpersonal relationships. The workplace is one context where changing demographics has become increasingly important. Many organizations are striving to comply with changing laws by implementing policies aimed at creating equal access and opportunity. Some organizations are going further than legal compliance to try to create inclusive climates where diversity is valued because of the interpersonal and economic benefits it has the potential to produce.

"Getting Real": Diversity Training

Businesses in the United States spend $200 to $300 million a year on diversity training, but is it effective? (Vedantam, 2008) If diversity training is conducted to advance a company's business goals and out of an understanding of the advantages that a diversity of background and thought offer a company, then the training is more likely to be successful. Many companies conduct mandatory diversity training based on a belief that they will be in a better position in court if a lawsuit is brought against them. However, research shows that training that is mandatory and undertaken only to educate people about the legal implications of diversity is ineffective and may even hurt diversity efforts. A commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace environment must include a multipronged approach. Experts recommend that a company put a staff person in charge of diversity efforts, and some businesses have gone as far as appointing a "chief diversity officer" (Cullen, 2007). The US Office of Personnel Management offers many good guidelines for conducting diversity training: create learning objectives related to the mission of the organization, use tested and appropriate training methods and materials, provide information about course content and expectations to employees ahead of training, provide the training in a supportive and noncoercive environment, use only experienced and qualified instructors, and monitor/evaluate training and revise as needed (US Office of Personnel Management, 2011). With these suggestions in mind, the increasingly common "real-world" event of diversity training is more likely to succeed.

1. Have you ever participated in any diversity training? If so, what did you learn or take away from the training? Which of the guidelines listed did your training do well or poorly on?
2. Do you think diversity training should be mandatory or voluntary? Why?
3. From what you've learned so far in this book, what communication skills are important for a diversity trainer to have?

We can now see that difference matters due to the inequalities that exist among cultural groups and due to changing demographics that affect our personal and social relationships. Unfortunately, there are many obstacles that may impede our valuing of difference (Allen, 2011). Individuals with dominant identities may not validate the experiences of those in nondominant groups because they do not experience the oppression directed at those with nondominant identities. Further, they may find it difficult to acknowledge that not being aware of this oppression is due to privilege associated with their dominant identities. Because of this lack of recognition of oppression, members of dominant groups may minimize, dismiss, or question the experiences of nondominant groups and view them as "complainers" or "whiners." Recall from our earlier discussion of identity formation that people with dominant identities may stay in the unexamined or acceptance stages for a long time. Being stuck in these stages makes it much more difficult to value difference.

Members of nondominant groups may have difficulty valuing difference due to negative experiences with the dominant group, such as not having their experiences validated. Both groups may be restrained from communicating about difference due to norms of political correctness, which may make people feel afraid to speak up because they may be perceived as insensitive or racist. All these obstacles are common and they are valid. However, as we will learn later, developing intercultural communication competence can help us gain new perspectives, become more mindful of our communication, and intervene in some of these negative cycles.

Key Takeaways

- Culture is an ongoing negotiation of learned patterns of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors.
- Each of us has personal, social, and cultural identities.
  - Personal identities are components of self that are primarily intrapersonal and connect to our individual interests and life experiences.
  - Social identities are components of self that are derived from our involvement in social groups to which we are interpersonally invested.
  - Cultural identities are components of self based on socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for our thoughts and behaviors.
- Nondominant identity formation may include a person moving from unawareness of the importance of their identities, to adopting the values of dominant society, to separating from dominant society, to integrating components of identities.
- Dominant identity formation may include a person moving from unawareness of their identities, to accepting the identity hierarchy, to separation from and guilt regarding the dominant group, to redefining and integrating components of identities.

- Difference matters because people are treated differently based on their identities and demographics and patterns of interaction are changing. Knowing why and how this came to be and how to navigate our increasingly diverse society can make us more competent communicators.

Exercises

1. List some of your personal, social, and cultural identities. Are there any that relate? If so, how? For your cultural identities, which ones are dominant and which ones are nondominant? What would a person who looked at this list be able to tell about you?
2. Describe a situation in which someone ascribed an identity to you that didn't match with your avowed identities. Why do you think the person ascribed the identity to you? Were there any stereotypes involved?
3. Getting integrated: Review the section that explains why difference matters. Discuss the ways in which difference may influence how you communicate in each of the following contexts: academic, professional, and personal.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

4.9: Cultural Power

Learning Objectives

At the end of the module, students will be able to:

1. explain the implications of culture on social status and stratification
2. summarize the mechanisms used by dominant groups to develop and sustain culturalpower
3. understand cultural hegemony
4. describe the consequences of social conflicts over cultural power
5. identify and evaluate cultural prejudice and discrimination

All humans are comprised of the same biological structure and matter. The unique distinctions among us stem from our culture (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). The differences in our values, beliefs, norms, expressive language, practices, and artifacts is which stands us apart from each other. Being culturally unique projects exclusivity that draws attention to our variations and differences. People find cultural fit or acceptance from those who share uniqueness or the same cultural characteristics. Consequently, people may find or experience intolerance or rejection from those with different cultural traits.

4.9.1: Cultural Hierarchies

4.9.2: Social and Cultural Capital

4.9.3: Cultural Hegemoney

4.9.4: Prejudice and Discrimination

4.9.S: Cultural Power (Summary)

Thumbnail: Counter service in a McDonald's restaurant in Dukhan, Qatar. (CC BY-SA 3.0 Unported; Vincent van Zeijst).

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4.9.1: Cultural Hierarchies

Cultural distinctions make groups unique, but they also provide a social structure for creating and ranking cultures based on similarities or differences. A cultural group's size and strength influences their power over a region, area, or other groups. Cultural power lends itself to social power that influences people's lives by controlling the prevailing norms or rules and making individuals adhere to the dominant culture voluntarily or involuntarily.

Culture is not a direct reflection of the social world (Griswold 2013). Humans mediate culture to define meaning and interpret the social world around them. As a result, dominant groups able to manipulate, reproduce, and influence culture among the masses. Common culture found in society is actually the selective transmission of elite-dominated values (Parenti 2006). This practice known as **cultural hegemony** suggests, culture is not autonomous, it is conditional dictated, regulated, and controlled by dominant groups. The major forces shaping culture are in the power of elite-dominated interests who make limited and marginal adjustments to appear culture is changing in alignment with evolving social values (Parenti 2006). The culturally dominating group often sets the standard for living and governs the distribution of resources.

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4.9.2: Social and Cultural Capital

Social and cultural relationships have productive benefits in society. Research defines social capital as a form of economic (e.g., money and property) and cultural (e.g., norms, fellowship, trust) assets central to a social network (Putnam 2000). The social networks people create and maintain with each other enable society to function. However, the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1972) found social capital produces and reproduces inequality when examining how people gain powerful positions through direct and indirect social connections. Social capital or a social network can help or hinder someone personally and socially. For example, strong and supportive social connections can facilitate job opportunities and promotion that are beneficial to the individual and social network. Weak and unsupportive social ties can jeopardize employment or advancement that are harmful to the individual and social group as well. People make cultural objects meaningful (Griswold 2013). Interactions and reasoning develop cultural perspectives and understanding. The “social mind” of groups process incoming signals influencing culture within the social structure including the social attributes and status of members in a society (Zerubavel 1999). Language and symbols express a person’s position in society and the expectations associated with their status. For example, the clothes people wear or car they drive represents style, fashion, and wealth. Owning designer clothing or a high performance sports car depicts a person’s access to financial resources and worth. The use of formal language and titles also represent social status such as salutations including your majesty, your highness, president, director, chief executive officer, and doctor.

People may occupy multiple statuses in a society. At birth, people are **ascribed** social status in alignment to their physical and mental features, gender, and race. In some cases, societies differentiate status according to physical or mental disability as well as if a child is female or male, or a racial minority. According to Dr. Jody Heymann, Dean of the World Policy Analysis Center at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, "Persons with disabilities are one of the last groups whose equal rights have been recognized" around the world (Brink 2016). A report by the World Policy Analysis Center (2016) shows only 28% of 193 countries participating in the global survey guarantee a right to quality education for people with disabilities and only 18% guarantee a right to work.

In some societies, people may earn or **achieve** status from their talents, efforts, or accomplishments (Griffiths et al. 2015). Obtaining higher education or being an artistic prodigy often correspond to high status. For example, a college degree awarded from an “Ivy League” university social weighs higher status than a degree from a public state college. Just as talented artists, musicians, and athletes receive honors, privileges, and celebrity status.

Additionally, the social, political hierarchy of a society or region designates social status. Consider the social labels within class, race, ethnicity, gender, education, profession, age, and family. **Labels** defining a person’s characteristics serve as their position within the larger group. People in a majority or **dominant group** have higher status (e.g., rich, white, male, physician, etc.) than those of the minority or **subordinate group** (e.g., poor, black, female, housekeeper, etc.). Overall, the location of a person on the social strata influences their social power and participation (Griswold 2013). Individuals with inferior power have limitations to social and physical resources including lack of authority, influence over others, formidable networks, capital, and money.

Social status serves as method for building and maintaining boundaries among and between people and groups. Status dictates social inclusion or exclusion resulting in **cultural stratification** or hierarchy whereby a person’s position in society regulates their cultural participation by others. Cultural attributes within social networks build community, group loyalty, and personal and social identity.

People sometimes engage in **status shifting** to garner acceptance or avoid attention. DuBois (1903) described the act of people looking through the eyes of others to measure social place or position as double consciousness. His research explored the history and cultural experiences of American slavery and the plight of black folk in translating thinking and behavior between racial contexts. DuBois’ research helped sociologists understand how and why people display one identity in certain settings and another in different ones. People must negotiate a social situation to decide how to project their social identity and assign a label that fits (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). Status shifting is evident when people move from informal to formal contexts. Our cultural identity and practices are very different at home than at school, work, or church. Each setting demands different aspects of who we are and our place in the social setting.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

This short video (https://youtu.be/5DBEYiBkgp8) summarizes Pierre Bourdieu's (1930-2002) theory of cultural capital or “the cultural knowledge that serves as currency that helps us navigate culture and alters our experiences and the opportunities available to us.” The video discusses three different forms of cultural capital: embodied state, objectified state, and

institutionalized state with examples of each type that students can apply to their own lives. At the end of the video, discussion questions are included to assist students in applying the concept of cultural capital to what is happening in the world today. Prepare a written response addressing the four discussion questions presented in the video to share with the class.



Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). (Public Domain).

Submitted By: Sociology Live!, Cindy Hager. "Cultural Capital" by The Sociological Cinema is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Sociologists find **cultural capital** or the social assets of person (including intellect, education, speech pattern, mannerisms, and dress) promote social mobility (Harper-Scott and Samson 2009). People who accumulate and display the cultural knowledge of a society or group may earn social acceptance, status, and power. Bourdieau (1991) explained the accumulation and transmission of culture is a social investment from **socializing agents** including family, peers, and community. People learn culture and cultural characteristics and traits from one another; however, social status effects whether people share, spread, or communicate cultural knowledge to each other. A person's social status in a group or society influences their ability to access and develop cultural capitol.

Cultural capital provides people access to cultural connections such as institutions, individuals, materials, and economic resources (Kennedy 2012). Status guides people in choosing who and when culture or cultural capital is transferable. Bourdieu (1991) believed cultural inheritance and personal biography attributes to individual success more than intelligence or talent. With status comes access to social and cultural capital that generates access to privileges and power among and between groups. Individuals with cultural capital deficits face social inequalities (Reay 2004). If someone does not have the cultural knowledge and skills to maneuver the social world she or he occupies, then she or he will not find acceptance within a group or society and access to support and resources.

COLLEGE SUCCESS AND CULTURAL CAPITAL

Cultural capital evaluates the validity of culture (i.e., language, values, norms, and access to material resources) on success and achievement. You can measure your cultural capital by examining the cultural traits and patterns of your life. The following questions examine student values and beliefs, parental and family support, residency status, language, childhood experiences focusing on access to cultural resources (e.g., books) and neighborhood vitality (e.g., employment opportunities), educational and professional influences, and barriers affecting college success (Kennedy 2012).

1. What are the most important values or beliefs influencing your life?
2. What kind of support have you received from your parents or family regarding school and your education?
3. How many generations has your family lived in the United States?
4. What do you consider your primary language? Did you have any difficulty learning to read or write the English language?
5. Did your family have more than fifty books in the house when you were growing up? What type of reading materials were in your house when you were growing up?
6. Did your family ever go to art galleries, museums, or plays when you were a child? What types of activities did your family do with their time other than work and school?
7. How would you describe the neighborhood where you grew up?
8. What illegal activities, if any, were present in the neighborhood where you grew up?
9. What employment opportunities were available to your parents or family in the neighborhood where you grew up?
10. Do you have immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers, or other professionals? What types of jobs have your family members had throughout their lives?
11. Why did you decide to go to college? What has influenced you to continue or complete your college education?
12. Did anyone ever discourage or prevent you from pursuing academics or a professional career?
13. Do you consider school easy or difficult for you?

14. What has been the biggest obstacle for you in obtaining a college education?
15. What has been the greatest opportunity for you in obtaining a college education?
16. How did you learn to navigate educational environments? Who taught you the “ins” and “outs” of college or school?

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4.9.3: Cultural Hegemoney

The very nature of cultural creation and production requires an audience to receive a cultural idea or product. Without people willing to receive culture, it cannot be sustainable or become an object (Griswold 2013). Power and influence play an integral part in **cultural creation** and marketing. The ruling class has the ability to establish cultural norms and manipulate society while turning a profit. Culture is a commodity and those in a position of power to create, produce, and distribute culture gain further social and economic power.

Culture producing organizations such as multinational corporations and media industries are in the business of producing mass culture products for profit. These organizations have the power to influence people throughout the world. Paul Hirsch (1972) referred to this enterprise as the **culture industry system** or the "market." In the culture industry system, multinational corporations and media industries (i.e., cultural creators) produce an excess supply of cultural objects to draw in public attention with the goal of flooding the market to ensure receipt and acceptance of at least one cultural idea or artifact by the people for monetary gain.

The culture industry system produces mass culture products to generate a **culture of consumption** (Grazian 2010). The production of mass culture thrives on the notion that culture influences people. In line with the humanities' perspective on culture, multinational corporations and media industries, believe they have the ability to control and manipulate culture by creating objects or products that people want and desire. This viewpoint suggests **cultural receivers** or the people are weak, apathetic, and consume culture for recognition and social status (Griswold 2013). If you consider the cultural object of buying and owning a home, the concept of owning a home represents attaining the "American dream." Even though not all Americans are able to buy and own a home, the cultural industry system has embedded home ownership as a requisite to success and achievement in America.



Figure 4.9.3.1: Street Lights of Times Square. (CC BY 4.0; Jose Francisco Fernandez Saura).

In contrast, **popular culture** implies people influence culture. This perspective indicates people are active makers in the creation and acceptance of cultural objects (Griswold 2013). Take into account one of the most popular musical genres today, rap music. The creative use of language and rhetorical styles and strategies of rap music gained local popularity in New York during the 1970s and entered mainstream acceptance in mid-1980s to early '90s (Caramanica 2005). The early developments of rap music by the masses led to the genre becoming a cultural object.

IS BROWN THE NEW GREEN?

Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. The culture industry system is seeking ways to profit from this group. As multinational corporations and media industries produce cultural objects or products geared toward this population, their cultural identity is transformed into a new subculture blending American and Latino values, beliefs, norms, and practices. Phillip Rodriguez is a documentary filmmaker on Latino culture, history, and identity. He and many other race and diversity experts are exploring the influence of consumption on American Latino culture.

1. Research the products and advertisements targeting Latinos in the United States. Describe the cultural objects and messaging encouraging a culture of consumption among this group.

2. What type of values, beliefs, norms, and practices are reinforced in the cultural objects or projects created by the culture industry system?
3. How might the purchase or consumption of the cultural objects or products you researched influence the self-image, identity, and social status of Latinos?
4. What new subculture arises by the blending of American and Latino culture? Describe the impact of uniting or combining these cultures on Latinos and Americans.

Today, rap music like other forms of music is being created and produced by major music labels and related media industries. The culture industry system uses media gatekeepers to regulate information including culture (Grazian 2010). Even with the ability of the people to create popular culture, multinational corporations and media industries maintain power to spread awareness, control access, and messaging. This power to influence the masses also gives the **hegemonic ruling class** known as the culture industry system the ability to reinforce stereotypes, close minds, and promote fear to encourage acceptance or rejection of certain cultural ideas and artifacts.

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4.9.4: Prejudice and Discrimination

Cultural intolerance may arise when individuals or groups confront new or differing values, beliefs, norms, expressive symbols, practices, or artifacts. Think about a time when you came across someone who did not fit the cultural "norm" either expressively or behaviorally. How did the person's presence make you feel? What type of thoughts ran through your head? Were you compelled to understand the differences between you and the other person or were you eager to dismiss, confront, or ignore the other person?

Living in a culturally diverse society requires us to tackle our anxiety of the unknown or unfamiliar. The discomfort or **cognitive dissonance** we feel when we are around others who live and think differently than ourselves makes us alter our thoughts and behaviors towards acceptance or rejection of the "different" person in order to restore cognitive balance (Festinger 1957). When people undergo culture shock or surprise from experiencing new culture, their minds undergo dissonance. Similar to a fight or flight response, we choose to learn and understand cultural differences or mock and run away from them.

People have a tendency to judge and evaluate each other on a daily basis. Assessing other people and our surroundings is necessary for interpreting and interacting in the social world. Problems arise when we judge others using our own cultural standards. We call the practice of judging others through our own cultural lens, **ethnocentrism**. This practice is a cultural universal. People everywhere think their culture is true, moral, proper, and right (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). By its very definition, ethnocentrism creates division and conflict between social groups whereby mediating differences is challenging when everyone believes they are culturally superior and their culture should be the standard for living.



Figure 4.9.4.1: Man with Gray Wash in Full Face Tattoo. (CC BY 4.0; vjapratama).

In contrast, **cultural relativism** insinuates judging a culture by the standards of another is objectionable. It seems reasonable to evaluate a person's values, beliefs, and practices from their own cultural standards rather than judged against the criteria of another (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). Learning to receive cultural differences from a place of empathy and understanding serves as a foundation for living together despite variances. Like many aspects of human civilization, culture is not absolute but relative suggesting values, beliefs, and practices are only standards of living as long as people accept and live by them (Boas 1887). Developing knowledge about cultures and cultural groups different from our own allows us to view and evaluate others from their cultural lens.

Sometimes people act on ethnocentric thinking and feel justified disregarding cultural relativism. Overcoming negative attitudes about people who are culturally different from us is challenging when we believe our culture and thinking are justified. Consider the social issue of infanticide or the killing of unwanted children after birth. The historical practice occurred in times of famine or hardship when resources were scarce to keep non-productive humans alive. Many people find infanticide a human rights violation regardless of a person's cultural traditions and beliefs and think the practice should stop. People often feel justified condemning the practice of infanticide and the people who believe and practice the tradition.

Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people (Griffiths et al. 2015). **Prejudice** is an attitude of thoughts and feelings directed at someone from prejudging or making negative assumptions. Negative attitudes about another's culture is a form of prejudice or bias. Prejudice is a learned behavior. Prejudicial attitudes can lead to discriminatory acts and behaviors. **Discrimination** is an action of unfair treatment against someone based on characteristics such as age, gender, race, religion, etc.

PRIVILEGE AND LIFE CHANCES

Research YouTube user-created videos on privilege and life chances such as the following:

- Privilege Activity by Adam Doyne (https://youtu.be/EIJqtWUiUCs)
- What is Privilege by BuzzFeedYellow (https://youtu.be/hD5f8GuNuGQ)

- Check Your Perspective, Not Your Privilege by Rachel West (https://youtu.be/zvWGINdhGiQ)

Complete the Test Your Life Chances exercise and type a written response addressing the following questions:

1. What life barriers or issues are you able to identify about yourself after completing the exercise?
2. What life advantages or opportunities are you able to distinguish about yourself after completing the exercise?
3. Were there any statements you found more difficult or easier to answer? Explain.
4. Were there any life challenges or obstacles that you have faced missing in the exercise? If so, explain.
5. Were there any life privileges you have experienced missing in the exercise? If so, explain.
6. Did you ever answer untruthfully on any of the statements? If you are comfortable sharing, explain which one(s)? Why did you not answer truthfully?
7. How do life's barriers and opportunities influence people's lives? What connections do you see among upward mobility and life chances in regards to: disability, racial-ethnic identity, gender identity, language, sexuality, and social class?

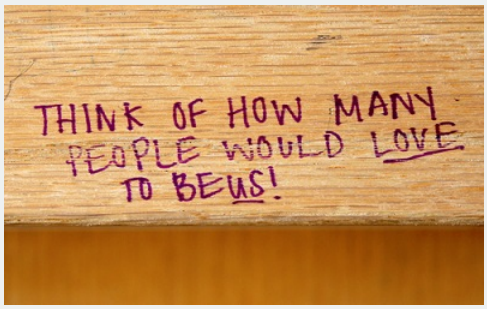


Figure 4.9.4.2: Day 173: Awareness of Privilege. Used with permission (CC BY-SA 4.0; Quinn Dombrowski).

Thinking the practice of infanticide should stop and those who practice it malevolent is prejudicial. Trying to stop the practice with force is discriminatory. There are times in the case of human rights issues like this where the fine line between criticizing with action (ethnocentrism) and understanding with empathy (cultural relativism) are clear. However, knowing the appropriate context when to judge or be open-minded is not always evident. Do we allow men to treat women as subordinates if their religion or faith justifies it? Do we allow people to eat sea turtles or live octopus if it is a delicacy? Do we stop children who do not receive vaccinations from attending school? All of these issues stem from cultural differences and distinguishing the appropriate response is not always easy to identify.

When social groups have or are in power, they have the ability to discriminate on a large scale. A dominant group or the ruling class impart their culture in society by passing laws and informally using the culture industry system or "market" to spread it. Access to these methods allows hegemonic groups to institutionalize discrimination. This results in unjust and unequal treatment of people by society and its institutions. Those who culturally align to the ruling class fare better than those who are different.

VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

PART 1

Visual ethnography is a qualitative research method of photographic images with socio-cultural representations. The experience of producing and discussing visual images or texts develops ethnographic knowledge and provides sociological insight into how people live. In your home or the place you live, take one photo of the following:

- The street you live on
- Your home
- Front door of your home
- Your family
- The living room
- The ceiling
- Your sofa or seating
- Lamps or lighting
- The stove
- The kitchen sink
- Your cutlery drawer
- Pantry or where you store food
- The toilet
- The shower or bathing area
- Your toothbrush
- Your bedroom
- Your wardrobe
- Your shoes
- Children's toys (if applicable)
- Children's playground (if applicable)
- Your pets
- Your car or method of transportation

PART 2

1. Watch the video by Anna Rosling Ronnlund entitled See How the Rest of the World Lives, Organized by Income: https://goo.gl/uJc6Vd
2. Next visit the website Dollar Street: https://goo.gl/Rb8WUJ
3. Once you have accessed the Dollar Street website, take the Quick Tour for a tutorial on how to use the site. If the Quick Tour does not appear when you click the site link, click the menu on the right-hand top corner and select Quick Guide, which will open the Quick Tour window.
4. After completing the Quick Tour, access your visual ethnography photos and compare your photographs with other people throughout the world.
5. For your analysis, in complete sentences explain the differences and similarities based on income and country. Specifically, describe what the poorest conditions are for each item as well as the richest conditions and what cultural similarities and/or differences exist in comparison to your items.

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4.9.S: Cultural Power (Summary)

Key Terms and Concepts

Achieved Status	Discrimination
Ascribed Status	Dominant Group
Cognitive Dissonance	Ethnocentrism
Cultural Capital	Hegemonic Ruling Class
Cultural Creation	Popular Culture
Cultural Fit	Prejudice
Cultural Hegemony	Social Capital
Cultural Power	Social Labels
Cultural Receivers	Social Status
Cultural Relativism	Socializing Agents
Cultural Stratification	Status Shifting
Culture Industry System	Stereotypes
Culture Of Consumption	Subordinate Group
Culture Producing Organizations	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Groups

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5.1: Types of Groups

Most of us feel comfortable using the word “group” without giving it much thought. In everyday use, it can be a generic term, although it carries important clinical and scientific meanings. Moreover, the concept of a group is central to much of how we think about society and human interaction. Often, we might mean different things by using that word. We might say that a group of kids all saw the dog, and it could mean 250 students in a lecture hall or four siblings playing on a front lawn. In everyday conversation, there isn’t a clear distinguishing use. So how can we hone the meaning more precisely for sociological purposes?

Defining a Group

The term group is an amorphous one and can refer to a wide variety of gatherings, from just two people (think about a “group project” in school when you partner with another student), a club, a regular gathering of friends, or people who work together or share a hobby. In short, the term refers to any collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share a sense that their identity is somehow aligned with the group. Of course, every time people are gathered it is not necessarily a group. A rally is usually a one-time event, for instance, and belonging to a political party doesn’t imply interaction with others. People who exist in the same place at the same time but who do not interact or share a sense of identity—such as a bunch of people standing in line at Starbucks—are considered an aggregate, or a crowd. Another example of a nongroup is people who share similar characteristics but are not tied to one another in any way. These people are considered a category, and as an example all children born from approximately 1980–2000 are referred to as “Millennials.” Why are Millennials a category and not a group? Because while some of them may share a sense of identity, they do not, as a whole, interact frequently with each other.

Interestingly, people within an aggregate or category can become a group. During disasters, people in a neighborhood (an aggregate) who did not know each other might become friendly and depend on each other at the local shelter. After the disaster ends and the people go back to simply living near each other, the feeling of cohesiveness may last since they have all shared an experience. They might remain a group, practicing emergency readiness, coordinating supplies for next time, or taking turns caring for neighbors who need extra help. Similarly, there may be many groups within a single category. Consider teachers, for example. Within this category, groups may exist like teachers’ unions, teachers who coach, or staff members who are involved with the PTA.

Types of Groups

Sociologist Charles Horton Cooley (1864–1929) suggested that groups can broadly be divided into two categories: primary groups and secondary groups (Cooley 1909). According to Cooley, primary groups play the most critical role in our lives. The primary group is usually fairly small and is made up of individuals who generally engage face-to-face in long-term emotional ways. This group serves emotional needs: expressive functions rather than pragmatic ones. The primary group is usually made up of significant others, those individuals who have the most impact on our socialization. The best example of a primary group is the family.

Secondary groups are often larger and impersonal. They may also be task-focused and time-limited. These groups serve aninstrumental function rather than an expressive one, meaning that their role is more goal- or task-oriented than emotional. A classroom or office can be an example of a secondary group. Neither primary nor secondary groups are bound by strict definitions or set limits. In fact, people can move from one group to another. A graduate seminar, for example, can start as a secondary group focused on the class at hand, but as the students work together throughout their program, they may find common interests and strong ties that transform them into a primary group.

BEST FRIENDS SHE’S NEVER MET

Writer Allison Levy worked alone. While she liked the freedom and flexibility of working from home, she sometimes missed having a community of coworkers, both for the practical purpose of brainstorming and the more social “water cooler” aspect. Levy did what many do in the Internet age: she found a group of other writers online through a web forum. Over time, a group of approximately twenty writers, who all wrote for a similar audience, broke off from the larger forum and started a private invitation-only forum. While writers in general represent all genders, ages, and interests, it ended up being a collection of twenty- and thirty-something women who comprised the new forum; they all wrote fiction for children and young adults.

At first, the writers’ forum was clearly a secondary group united by the members’ professions and work situations. As Levy explained, “On the Internet, you can be present or absent as often as you want. No one is expecting you to show up.” It was a useful place to research information about different publishers and about who had recently sold what and to track industry trends. But as time passed, Levy found it served a different purpose. Since the group shared other characteristics beyond their writing (such as age

and gender), the online conversation naturally turned to matters such as child-rearing, aging parents, health, and exercise. Levy found it was a sympathetic place to talk about any number of subjects, not just writing. Further, when people didn't post for several days, others expressed concern, asking whether anyone had heard from the missing writers. It reached a point where most members would tell the group if they were traveling or needed to be offline for awhile.

The group continued to share. One member on the site who was going through a difficult family illness wrote, "I don't know where I'd be without you women. It is so great to have a place to vent that I know isn't hurting anyone." Others shared similar sentiments.

So is this a primary group? Most of these people have never met each other. They live in Hawaii, Australia, Minnesota, and across the world. They may never meet. Levy wrote recently to the group, saying, "Most of my 'real-life' friends and even my husband don't really get the writing thing. I don't know what I'd do without you." Despite the distance and the lack of physical contact, the group clearly fills an expressive need.



Engineering and construction students gather around a job site. How do your academic interests define your in- and out-groups? (Photo courtesy of USACEpublicaffairs/flickr)

In-Groups and Out-Groups

One of the ways that groups can be powerful is through inclusion, and its inverse, exclusion. The feeling that we belong in an elite or select group is a heady one, while the feeling of not being allowed in, or of being in competition with a group, can be motivating in a different way. Sociologist William Sumner (1840–1910) developed the concepts of in-group and out-group to explain this phenomenon (Sumner 1906). In short, an in-group is the group that an individual feels she belongs to, and she believes it to be an integral part of who she is. An out-group, conversely, is a group someone doesn't belong to; often we may feel disdain or competition in relationship to an out-group. Sports teams, unions, and sororities are examples of in-groups and out-groups; people may belong to, or be an outsider to, any of these. Primary groups consist of both in-groups and out-groups, as do secondary groups.

While group affiliations can be neutral or even positive, such as the case of a team sport competition, the concept of in-groups and out-groups can also explain some negative human behavior, such as white supremacist movements like the Ku Klux Klan, or the bullying of gay or lesbian students. By defining others as "not like us" and inferior, in-groups can end up practicing ethnocentrism, racism, sexism, ageism, and heterosexism—manners of judging others negatively based on their culture, race, sex, age, or sexuality. Often, in-groups can form within a secondary group. For instance, a workplace can have cliques of people, from senior executives who play golf together, to engineers who write code together, to young singles who socialize after hours. While these in-groups might show favoritism and affinity for other in-group members, the overall organization may be unable or unwilling to acknowledge it. Therefore, it pays to be wary of the politics of in-groups, since members may exclude others as a form of gaining status within the group.

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING: HOW TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED THE GAME

Most of us know that the old rhyme "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" is inaccurate. Words can hurt, and never is that more apparent than in instances of bullying. Bullying has always existed and has often reached extreme levels of cruelty in children and young adults. People at these stages of life are especially vulnerable to others' opinions of them, and they're deeply invested in their peer groups. Today, technology has ushered in a new era of this dynamic. Cyberbullying is the use of interactive media by one person to torment another, and it is on the rise. Cyberbullying can mean sending threatening texts, harassing someone in a public forum (such as Facebook), hacking someone's account and pretending to be him or her, posting embarrassing images online, and so on. A study by the Cyberbullying Research Center found that 20 percent of middle school students admitted to "seriously thinking about committing suicide" as a result of online bullying (Hinduja and Patchin 2010). Whereas bullying face-to-face requires willingness to interact with your victim, cyberbullying allows bullies to harass others from

the privacy of their homes without witnessing the damage firsthand. This form of bullying is particularly dangerous because it's widely accessible and therefore easier to accomplish.

Cyberbullying, and bullying in general, made international headlines in 2010 when a fifteen-year-old girl, Phoebe Prince, in South Hadley, Massachusetts, committed suicide after being relentlessly bullied by girls at her school. In the aftermath of her death, the bullies were prosecuted in the legal system and the state passed anti-bullying legislation. This marked a significant change in how bullying, including cyberbullying, is viewed in the United States. Now there are numerous resources for schools, families, and communities to provide education and prevention on this issue. The White House hosted a Bullying Prevention summit in March 2011, and President and First Lady Obama have used Facebook and other social media sites to discuss the importance of the issue.

According to a report released in 2013 by the National Center for Educational Statistics, close to 1 in every 3 (27.8 percent) students report being bullied by their school peers. Seventeen percent of students reported being the victims of cyberbullying.

Will legislation change the behavior of would-be cyberbullies? That remains to be seen. But we can hope communities will work to protect victims before they feel they must resort to extreme measures.

Reference Groups



Athletes are often viewed as a reference group for young people. (Photo courtesy of Johnny Bivera/U.S. Navy/Wikimedia Commons)

A reference group is a group that people compare themselves to—it provides a standard of measurement. In U.S. society, peer groups are common reference groups. Kids and adults pay attention to what their peers wear, what music they like, what they do with their free time—and they compare themselves to what they see. Most people have more than one reference group, so a middle school boy might look not just at his classmates but also at his older brother's friends and see a different set of norms. And he might observe the antics of his favorite athletes for yet another set of behaviors.

Some other examples of reference groups can be one's cultural center, workplace, family gathering, and even parents. Often, reference groups convey competing messages. For instance, on television and in movies, young adults often have wonderful apartments and cars and lively social lives despite not holding a job. In music videos, young women might dance and sing in a sexually aggressive way that suggests experience beyond their years. At all ages, we use reference groups to help guide our behavior and show us social norms. So how important is it to surround yourself with positive reference groups? You may not recognize a reference group, but it still influences the way you act. Identifying your reference groups can help you understand the source of the social identities you aspire to or want to distance yourself from.

COLLEGE: A WORLD OF IN-GROUPS, OUT-GROUPS, AND REFERENCE GROUPS



Which fraternity or sorority would you fit into, if any? Sorority recruitment day offers students an opportunity to learn about these different groups. (Photo courtesy of Murray State/flickr)

For a student entering college, the sociological study of groups takes on an immediate and practical meaning. After all, when we arrive someplace new, most of us glance around to see how well we fit in or stand out in the ways we want. This is a natural response to a reference group, and on a large campus, there can be many competing groups. Say you are a strong athlete who wants to play intramural sports, and your favorite musicians are a local punk band. You may find yourself engaged with two very different reference groups.

These reference groups can also become your in-groups or out-groups. For instance, different groups on campus might solicit you to join. Are there fraternities and sororities at your school? If so, chances are they will try to convince students—that is, students they deem worthy—to join them. And if you love playing soccer and want to play on a campus team, but you're wearing shredded jeans, combat boots, and a local band T-shirt, you might have a hard time convincing the soccer team to give you a chance. While most campus groups refrain from insulting competing groups, there is a definite sense of an in-group versus an out-group. "Them?" a member might say. "They're all right, but their parties are nowhere near as cool as ours." Or, "Only serious engineering geeks join that group." This immediate categorization into in-groups and out-groups means that students must choose carefully, since whatever group they associate with won't just define their friends—it may also define their enemies.

Summary

Groups largely define how we think of ourselves. There are two main types of groups: primary and secondary. As the names suggest, the primary group is the long-term, complex one. People use groups as standards of comparison to define themselves—both who they are and who they are not. Sometimes groups can be used to exclude people or as a tool that strengthens prejudice.

Section Quiz

What does a Functionalist consider when studying a phenomenon like the Occupy Wall Street movement?

1. The minute functions that every person at the protests plays in the whole
2. The internal conflicts that play out within such a diverse and leaderless group
3. How the movement contributes to the stability of society by offering the discontented a safe, controlled outlet for dissension
4. The factions and divisions that form within the movement

What is the largest difference between the Functionalist and Conflict perspectives and the Interactionist perspective?

1. The former two consider long-term repercussions of the group or situation, while the latter focuses on the present.
2. The first two are the more common sociological perspective, while the latter is a newer sociological model.
3. The first two focus on hierarchical roles within an organization, while the last takes a more holistic view.
4. The first two perspectives address large-scale issues facing groups, while the last examines more detailed aspects.

What role do secondary groups play in society?

1. They are transactional, task-based, and short-term, filling practical needs.
2. They provide a social network that allows people to compare themselves to others.
3. The members give and receive emotional support.
4. They allow individuals to challenge their beliefs and prejudices.

When a high school student gets teased by her basketball team for receiving an academic award, she is dealing with competing _____.

1. primary groups
2. out-groups
3. reference groups
4. secondary groups

Which of the following is *not* an example of an in-group?

1. The Ku Klux Klan
2. A fraternity
3. A synagogue
4. A high school

What is a group whose values, norms, and beliefs come to serve as a standard for one's own behavior?

1. Secondary group

2. Formal organization
3. Reference group
4. Primary group

A parent who is worrying over her teenager's dangerous and self-destructive behavior and low self-esteem may wish to look at her child's:

1. reference group
2. in-group
3. out-group
4. All of the above

Answers

(1:C, 2:D, 3:A, 4:C, 5:D, 6:C, 7:D)

Short Answer

How has technology changed your primary groups and secondary groups? Do you have more (and separate) primary groups due to online connectivity? Do you believe that someone, like Levy, can have a true primary group made up of people she has never met? Why, or why not?

Compare and contrast two different political groups or organizations, such as the Occupy and Tea Party movements, or one of the Arab Spring uprisings. How do the groups differ in terms of leadership, membership, and activities? How do the group's goals influence participants? Are any of them in-groups (and have they created out-groups)? Explain your answer.

The concept of hate crimes has been linked to in-groups and out-groups. Can you think of an example where people have been excluded or tormented due to this kind of group dynamic?

Further Research

For more information about cyberbullying causes and statistics, check out this website: http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Cyberbullying

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Glossary

aggregate
a collection of people who exist in the same place at the same time, but who don’t interact or share a sense of identity

category
people who share similar characteristics but who are not connected in any way

expressive function
a group function that serves an emotional need

group
any collection of at least two people who interact with some frequency and who share some sense of aligned identity

in-group
a group a person belongs to and feels is an integral part of his identity

instrumental function
being oriented toward a task or goal

out-group
a group that an individual is not a member of, and may even compete with

primary groups
small, informal groups of people who are closest to us

reference groups
groups to which an individual compares herself

secondary groups
larger and more impersonal groups that are task-focused and time limited

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5.2: The Psychology of Groups

Learning Objectives

16.1 Introduction to the Psychology of Groups

This module assumes that a thorough understanding of people requires a thorough understanding of groups. Each of us is an autonomous individual seeking our own objectives, yet we are also members of groups—groups that constrain us, guide us, and sustain us. Just as each of us influences the group and the people in the group, so, too, do groups change each one of us. Joining groups satisfies our need to belong, gain information and understanding through social comparison, define our sense of self and social identity, and achieve goals that might elude us if we worked alone. Groups are also practically significant, for much of the world's work is done by groups rather than by individuals. Success sometimes eludes our groups, but when group members learn to work together as a cohesive team their success becomes more certain. People also turn to groups when important decisions must be made, and this choice is justified as long as groups avoid such problems as group polarization and groupthink.



How many groups are you a part of on a daily basis? Whether it's family, class, work, social, sports, church or other areas, we typically spend a good deal of our time and attention each day interacting with others in groups. [Image: CC0 Public Domain, goo.gl/m25gce]

Psychologists study groups because nearly all human activities—working, learning, worshiping, relaxing, playing, and even sleeping—occur in groups. The lone individual who is cut off from all groups is a rarity. Most of us live out our lives in groups, and these groups have a profound impact on our thoughts, feelings, and actions. Many psychologists focus their attention on single individuals, but social psychologists expand their analysis to include groups, organizations, communities, and even cultures.

This module examines the psychology of groups and group membership. It begins with a basic question: What is the psychological significance of groups? People are, undeniably, more often in groups rather than alone. What accounts for this marked gregariousness and what does it say about our psychological makeup? The module then reviews some of the key findings from studies of groups. Researchers have asked many questions about people and groups: Do people work as hard as they can when they are in groups? Are groups more cautious than individuals? Do groups make wiser decisions than single individuals? In many cases the answers are not what common sense and folk wisdom might suggest.

16.2 The Psychological Significance of Groups

Many people loudly proclaim their autonomy and independence. Like Ralph Waldo Emerson, they avow, "I must be myself. I will not hide my tastes or aversions . . . . I will seek my own" (1903/2004, p. 127). Even though people are capable of living separate and apart from others, they join with others because groups meet their psychological and social needs.

The Need to Belong



The need to belong is a strong psychological motivation. [Image: CC0 Public Domain, goo.gl/m25gce]

Across individuals, societies, and even eras, humans consistently seek inclusion over exclusion, membership over isolation, and acceptance over rejection. As Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary conclude, humans have a *need to belong*: "a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and impactful interpersonal relationships" (1995, p. 497). And most of us satisfy this need by joining groups. When surveyed, 87.3% of Americans reported that they lived with other people, including family members, partners, and roommates (Davis & Smith, 2007). The majority, ranging from 50% to 80%, reported regularly doing things in groups, such as attending a sports event together, visiting one another for the evening, sharing a meal together, or going out as a group to see a movie (Putnam, 2000).

People respond negatively when their need to belong is unfulfilled. For example, college students often feel homesick and lonely when they first start college, but not if they belong to a cohesive, socially satisfying group (Buote et al., 2007). People who are accepted members of a group tend to feel happier and more satisfied. But should they be rejected by a group, they feel unhappy, helpless, and depressed. Studies of ostracism—the deliberate exclusion from groups—indicate this experience is highly stressful and can lead to depression, confused thinking, and even aggression (Williams, 2007). When researchers used a functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner to track neural responses to exclusion, they found that people who were left out of a group activity displayed heightened cortical activity in two specific areas of the brain—the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex and the anterior insula. These areas of the brain are associated with the experience of physical pain sensations (Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003). It hurts, quite literally, to be left out of a group.

Affiliation in Groups

Groups not only satisfy the need to belong, they also provide members with information, assistance, and social support. Leon Festinger's theory of social comparison (1950, 1954) suggested that in many cases people join with others to evaluate the accuracy of their personal beliefs and attitudes. Stanley Schachter (1959) explored this process by putting individuals in ambiguous, stressful situations and asking them if they wished to wait alone or with others. He found that people *affiliate* in such situations—they seek the company of others.

Although any kind of companionship is appreciated, we prefer those who provide us with reassurance and support as well as accurate information. In some cases, we also prefer to join with others who are even worse off than we are. Imagine, for example, how you would respond when the teacher hands back the test and yours is marked 85%. Do you want to affiliate with a friend who got a 95% or a friend who got a 78%? To maintain a sense of self-worth, people seek out and compare themselves to the less fortunate. This process is known as *downward social comparison*.

Identity and Membership

Groups are not only founts of information during times of ambiguity, they also help us answer the existentially significant question, "Who am I?" Common sense tells us that our sense of self is our private definition of who we are, a kind of archival record of our experiences, qualities, and capabilities. Yet, the self also includes all those qualities that spring from memberships in groups. People are defined not only by their traits, preferences, interests, likes, and dislikes, but also by their friendships, social roles, family connections, and group memberships. The self is not just a "me," but also a "we."

Even demographic qualities such as sex or age can influence us if we categorize ourselves based on these qualities. Social identity theory, for example, assumes that we don't just classify *other* people into such social categories as man, woman, Anglo, elderly, or college student, but we also categorize ourselves. Moreover, if we strongly identify with these categories, then we will ascribe the characteristics of the typical member of these groups to

ourselves, and so stereotype ourselves. If, for example, we believe that college students are intellectual, then we will assume we, too, are intellectual if we identify with that group (Hogg, 2001).

Groups also provide a variety of means for maintaining and enhancing a sense of self-worth, as our assessment of the quality of groups we belong to influences our collective self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990). If our self-esteem is shaken by a personal setback, we can focus on our group's success and prestige. In addition, by comparing our group to other groups, we frequently discover that we are members of the better group, and so can take pride in our superiority. By denigrating other groups, we elevate both our personal and our collective self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989).

Mark Leary's sociometer model goes so far as to suggest that "self-esteem is part of a sociometer that monitors peoples' relational value in other people's eyes" (2007, p. 328). He maintains self-esteem is not just an index of one's sense of personal value, but also an indicator of acceptance into groups. Like a gauge that indicates how much fuel is left in the tank, a dip in self-esteem indicates exclusion from our group is likely. Disquieting feelings of self-worth, then, prompt us to search for and correct characteristics and qualities that put us at risk of social exclusion. Self-esteem is not just high self-regard, but the self-approbation that we feel when included in groups (Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Evolutionary Advantages of Group Living

Groups may be humans' most useful invention, for they provide us with the means to reach goals that would elude us if we remained alone. Individuals in groups can secure advantages and avoid disadvantages that would plague the lone individuals. In his theory of social integration, Moreland concludes that groups tend to form whenever "people become dependent on one another for the satisfaction of their needs" (1987, p. 104). The advantages of group life may be so great that humans are biologically prepared to seek membership and avoid isolation. From an evolutionary psychology perspective, because groups have increased humans' overall fitness for countless generations, individuals who carried genes that promoted solitude-seeking were less likely to survive and procreate compared to those with genes that prompted them to join groups (Darwin, 1859/1963). This process of natural selection culminated in the creation of a modern human who seeks out membership in groups instinctively, for most of us are descendants of "joiners" rather than "loners."

16.3 Motivation and Performance

Groups usually exist for a reason. In groups, we solve problems, create products, create standards, communicate knowledge, have fun, perform arts, create institutions, and even ensure our safety from attacks by other groups. But do groups always outperform individuals?

Social Facilitation in Groups

Do people perform more effectively when alone or when part of a group? Norman Triplett (1898) examined this issue in one of the first empirical studies in psychology. While watching bicycle races, Triplett noticed that cyclists were faster when they competed against other racers than when they raced alone against the clock. To determine if the presence of others leads to the psychological stimulation that enhances performance, he arranged for 40 children to play a game that involved turning a small reel as quickly as possible (see Figure 1). When he measured how quickly they turned the reel, he confirmed that children performed slightly better when they played the game in pairs compared to when they played alone (see Stroebe, 2012; Strube, 2005).

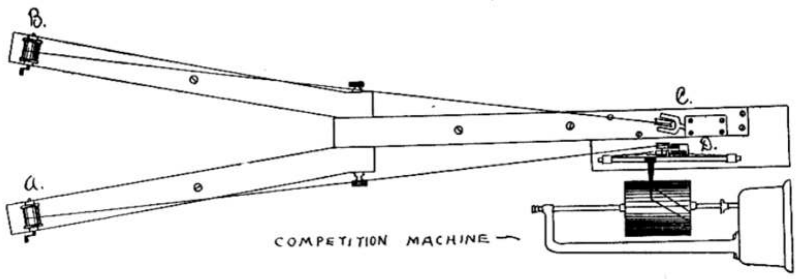


Figure 1: The "competition machine" Triplett used to study the impact of competition on performance. Triplett's study was one of the first laboratory studies conducted in the field of social psychology. Triplett, N. (1898)

Triplett succeeded in sparking interest in a phenomenon now known as social facilitation: the enhancement of an individual's performance when that person works in the presence of other people. However, it remained for Robert Zajonc (1965) to specify when social facilitation does and does not occur. After reviewing prior research, Zajonc noted that the facilitating effects of an audience usually only occur when the task requires the person to perform dominant responses, i.e., ones that are well-learned or based on instinctive behaviors. If the task requires nondominant responses, i.e., novel, complicated, or untried behaviors that the organism has never performed before or has performed only infrequently, then the presence of others inhibits performance. Hence, students write poorer quality essays on complex philosophical questions when they labor in a group rather than alone (Allport, 1924), but they make fewer mistakes in solving simple, low-level multiplication problems with an audience or a coactor than when they work in isolation (Dashiell, 1930).

Social facilitation, then, depends on the task: other people facilitate performance when the task is so simple that it requires only dominant responses, but others interfere when the task requires nondominant responses. However, a number of psychological processes combine to influence when social facilitation, not social interference, occurs. Studies of the challenge-threat response and brain imaging, for example, confirm that we respond physiologically and neurologically to the presence of others (Blascovich, Mendes, Hunter, & Salomon, 1999). Other people also can trigger *evaluation apprehension*, particularly when we feel that our individual performance will be known to others, and those others might judge it negatively (Bond, Atoum, & VanLeeuwen, 1996). The presence of other people can also cause perturbations in our capacity to concentrate on and process information

(Harkins, 2006). Distractions due to the presence of other people have been shown to improve performance on certain tasks, such as the *Stroop task*, but undermine performance on more cognitively demanding tasks(Huguet, Galvaing, Monteil, & Dumas, 1999).

Social Loafing

Groups usually outperform individuals. A single student, working alone on a paper, will get less done in an hour than will four students working on a group project. One person playing a tug-of-war game against a group will lose. A crew of movers can pack up and transport your household belongings faster than you can by yourself. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light the work" (Littlepage, 1991; Steiner, 1972).

Groups, though, tend to be underachievers. Studies of social facilitation confirmed the positive motivational benefits of working with other people on well-practiced tasks in which each member's contribution to the collective enterprise can be identified and evaluated. But what happens when tasks require a truly collective effort? First, when people work together they must coordinate their individual activities and contributions to reach the maximum level of efficiency—but they rarely do (Diehl & Stroebe, 1987). Three people in a tug-of-war competition, for example, invariably pull and pause at slightly different times, so their efforts are uncoordinated. The result is *coordination loss*: the three-person group is stronger than a single person, but not three times as strong. Second, people just don't exert as much effort when working on a collective endeavor, nor do they expend as much cognitive effort trying to solve problems, as they do when working alone. They display social loafing (Latané, 1981).

Bibb Latané, Kip Williams, and Stephen Harkins (1979) examined both coordination losses and social loafing by arranging for students to cheer or clap either alone or in groups of varying sizes. The students cheered alone or in 2- or 6-person groups, or they were lead to believe they were in 2- or 6-person groups (those in the "pseudo-groups" wore blindfolds and headsets that played masking sound). As Figure 2 indicates, groups generated more noise than solitary subjects, but the productivity dropped as the groups became larger in size. In dyads, each subject worked at only 66% of capacity, and in 6-person groups at 36%. Productivity also dropped when subjects merely believed they were in groups. If subjects thought that one other person was shouting with them, they shouted 82% as intensely, and if they thought five other people were shouting, they reached only 74% of their capacity. These loses in productivity were not due to coordination problems; this decline in production could be attributed only to a reduction in effort—to social loafing (Latané et al., 1979, Experiment 2).

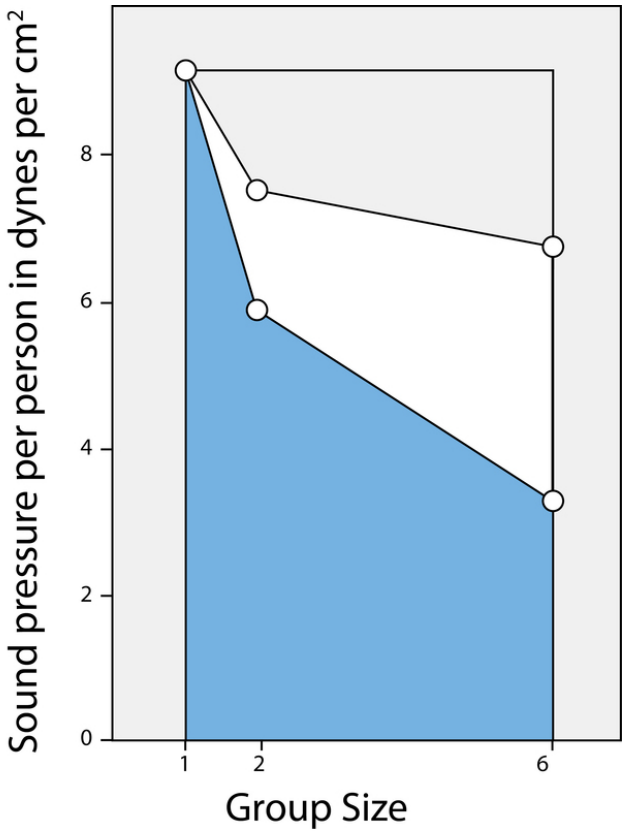


Figure 2: Sound pressure per person as a function of group or pseudo group size. Latane, B. (1981)

Teamwork



Social loafing can be a problem. One way to overcome it is by recognizing that each group member has an important part to play in the success of the group. [Image: Marc Dalmulder, https://goo.gl/Xa5aiE, CC BY 2.0, goo.gl/BRvSA7]

Social loafing is no rare phenomenon. When sales personnel work in groups with shared goals, they tend to "take it easy" if another salesperson is nearby who can do their work (George, 1992). People who are trying to generate new, creative ideas in group brainstorming sessions usually put in less effort and are thus less productive than people who are generating new ideas individually (Paulus & Brown, 2007). Students assigned group projects often complain of inequity in the quality and quantity of each member's contributions: Some people just don't work as much as they should to help the group reach its learning goals (Neu, 2012). People carrying out all sorts of physical and mental tasks expend less effort when working in groups, and the larger the group, the more they loaf (Karau & Williams, 1993).

Groups can, however, overcome this impediment to performance through teamwork. A group may include many talented individuals, but they must learn how to pool their individual abilities and energies to maximize the team's performance. Team goals must be set, work patterns structured, and a sense of group identity developed. Individual members must learn how to coordinate their actions, and any strains and stresses in interpersonal relations need to be identified and resolved (Salas, Rosen, Burke, & Goodwin, 2009).

Researchers have identified two key ingredients to effective teamwork: a shared mental representation of the task and group unity. Teams improve their performance over time as they develop a shared understanding of the team and the tasks they are attempting. Some semblance of this shared mental model is present nearly from its inception, but as the team practices, differences among the members in terms of their understanding of their situation and their team diminish as a consensus becomes implicitly accepted (Tindale, Stawiski, & Jacobs, 2008).

Effective teams are also, in most cases, cohesive groups (Dion, 2000). Group cohesion is the integrity, solidarity, social integration, or unity of a group. In most cases, members of cohesive groups like each other and the group and they also are united in their pursuit of collective, group-level goals. Members tend to enjoy their groups more when they are cohesive, and cohesive groups usually outperform ones that lack cohesion.

This cohesion-performance relationship, however, is a complex one. Meta-analytic studies suggest that cohesion improves teamwork among members, but that performance quality influences cohesion more than cohesion influences performance (Mullen & Copper, 1994; Mullen, Driskell, & Salas, 1998; see Figure 3). Cohesive groups also can be spectacularly unproductive if the group's norms stress low productivity rather than high productivity (Seashore, 1954).

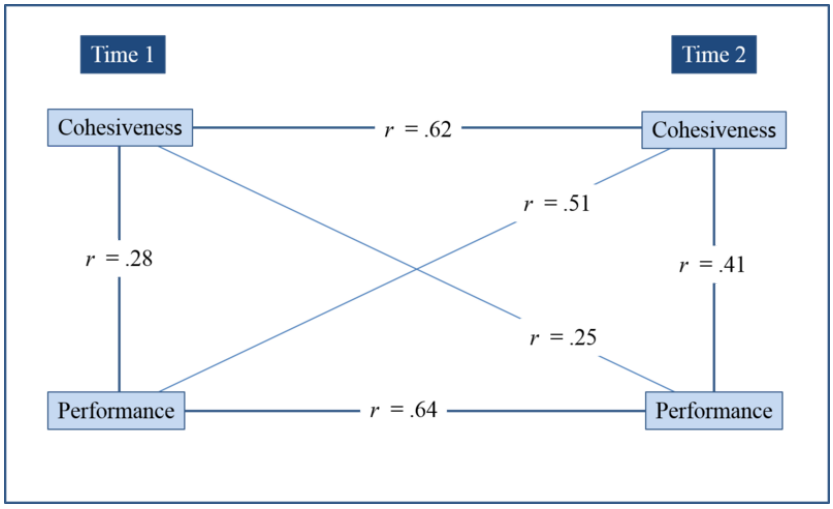


Figure 3: The relationship between group cohesion and performance over time. Groups that are cohesive do tend to perform well on tasks now (Time1) and in the future (Time 2). Notice, though, that the relationship between Performance at Time 1 and Cohesiveness at Time 2 is greater (r=.51) than the relationship between Cohesion at Time 1 and Performance at Time 2 (r=.25). These findings suggest that cohesion improves performance, but that a group that performs well is likely to also become more cohesive. Mullen, Driskell, & Salas (1998)

Group Development

In most cases, groups do not become smooth-functioning teams overnight. As Bruce Tuckman's (1965) theory of group development suggests, groups usually pass through several stages of development as they change from a newly formed group into an effective team. As noted in Focus Topic 1, in the *forming* phase, the members become oriented toward one another. In the *storming* phase, the group members find themselves in conflict, and some solution is sought to improve the group environment. In the *norming*, phase standards for behavior and roles develop that regulate behavior. In the *performing*, phase the group has reached a point where it can work as a unit to achieve desired goals, and the *adjourning* phase ends the sequence of development; the group disbands. Throughout these stages, groups tend to oscillate between the task-oriented issues and the relationship issues, with members sometimes working hard but at other times strengthening their interpersonal bonds (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977).

Focus Topic 1: Group Development Stages and Characteristics

Stage 1 – "Forming". Members expose information about themselves in polite but tentative interactions. They explore the purposes of the group and gather information about each other's interests, skills, and personal tendencies.

Stage 2 – "Storming". Disagreements about procedures and purposes surface, so criticism and conflict increase. Much of the conflict stems from challenges between members who are seeking to increase their status and control in the group.

Stage 3 – "Norming". Once the group agrees on its goals, procedures, and leadership, norms, roles, and social relationships develop that increase the group's stability and cohesiveness.

Stage 4 – "Performing". The group focuses its energies and attention on its goals, displaying higher rates of task-orientation, decision-making, and problem-solving.

Stage 5 – "Adjourning". The group prepares to disband by completing its tasks, reduces levels of dependency among members, and dealing with any unresolved issues.

Sources based on Tuckman (1965) and Tuckman & Jensen (1977)

We also experience change as we pass through a group, for we don't become full-fledged members of a group in an instant. Instead, we gradually become a part of the group and remain in the group until we leave it. Richard Moreland and John Levine's (1982) model of group socialization describes this process, beginning with initial entry into the group and ending when the member exits it. For example, when you are thinking of joining a new group—a social club, a professional society, a fraternity or sorority, or a sports team—you investigate what the group has to offer, but the group also investigates you. During this investigation stage you are still an outsider: interested in joining the group, but not yet committed to it in any way. But once the group accepts you and you accept the group, socialization begins: you learn the group's norms and take on different responsibilities depending on your role. On a sports team, for example, you may initially hope to be a star who starts every game or plays a particular position, but the team may need something else from you. In time, though, the group will accept you as a full-fledged member and both sides in the process—you and the group itself—increase their commitment to one another. When that commitment wanes, however, your membership may come to an end as well.

16.4 Making Decisions in Groups

Groups are particularly useful when it comes to making a decision, for groups can draw on more resources than can a lone individual. A single individual may know a great deal about a problem and possible solutions, but his or her information is far surpassed by the combined knowledge of a group. Groups not only generate more ideas and possible solutions by discussing the problem, but they can also more objectively evaluate the options that they generate during discussion. Before accepting a solution, a group may require that a certain number of people favor it, or that it meets some other standard of acceptability. People generally feel that a group's decision will be superior to an individual's decision.

Groups, however, do not always make good decisions. Juries sometimes render verdicts that run counter to the evidence presented. Community groups take radical stances on issues before thinking through all the ramifications. Military strategists concoct plans that seem, in retrospect, ill-conceived and short-sighted. Why do groups sometimes make poor decisions?

Group Polarization

Let's say you are part of a group assigned to make a presentation. One of the group members suggests showing a short video that, although amusing, includes some provocative images. Even though initially you think the clip is inappropriate, you begin to change your mind as the group discusses the idea. The group decides, eventually, to throw caution to the wind and show the clip—and your instructor is horrified by your choice.

This hypothetical example is consistent with studies of groups making decisions that involve risk. Common sense notions suggest that groups exert a moderating, subduing effect on their members. However, when researchers looked at groups closely, they discovered many groups shift toward more extreme decisions rather than less extreme decisions after group interaction. Discussion, it turns out, doesn't moderate people's judgments after all. Instead, it leads to group polarization: judgments made after group discussion will be more extreme in the same direction as the average of individual judgments made prior to discussion (Myers & Lamm, 1976). If a majority of members feel that taking risks is more acceptable than exercising caution, then the group will become riskier after a discussion. For example, in France, where people generally like their government but dislike Americans, group discussion improved their attitude toward their government but exacerbated their negative opinions of Americans (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969). Similarly, prejudiced people who discussed racial issues with other prejudiced individuals became even more negative, but those who were relatively unprejudiced exhibited even more acceptance of diversity when in groups (Myers & Bishop, 1970).

Common Knowledge Effect

One of the advantages of making decisions in groups is the group's greater access to information. When seeking a solution to a problem, group members can put their ideas on the table and share their knowledge and judgments with each other through discussions. But all too often groups spend much of their discussion time examining common knowledge—information that two or more group members know in common—rather than unshared information. This common knowledge effect will result in a bad outcome if something known by only one or two group members is very important.

Researchers have studied this bias using the *hidden profile task*. On such tasks, information known to many of the group members suggests that one alternative, say Option A, is best. However, Option B is definitely the better choice, but all the facts that support Option B are only known to individual groups members—they are not common knowledge in the group. As a result, the group will likely spend most of its time reviewing the factors that favor Option A, and never discover any of its drawbacks. In consequence, groups often perform poorly when working on problems with nonobvious solutions that can only be identified by extensive information sharing (Stasser & Titus, 1987).

Groupthink



Groupthink helps us blend in and feel accepted and validated but it can also lead to problems. [Image: CC0 Public Domain, goo.gl/m25gce]

Groups sometimes make spectacularly bad decisions. In 1961, a special advisory committee to President John F. Kennedy planned and implemented a covert invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs that ended in total disaster. In 1986, NASA carefully, and incorrectly, decided to launch the Challenger space shuttle in temperatures that were too cold.

Irving Janis (1982), intrigued by these kinds of blundering groups, carried out a number of case studies of such groups: the military experts that planned the defense of Pearl Harbor; Kennedy's Bay of Pigs planning group; the presidential team that escalated the war in Vietnam. Each group, he concluded, fell prey to a distorted style of thinking that rendered the group members incapable of making a rational decision. Janis labeled this syndrome groupthink: "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action" (p. 9).

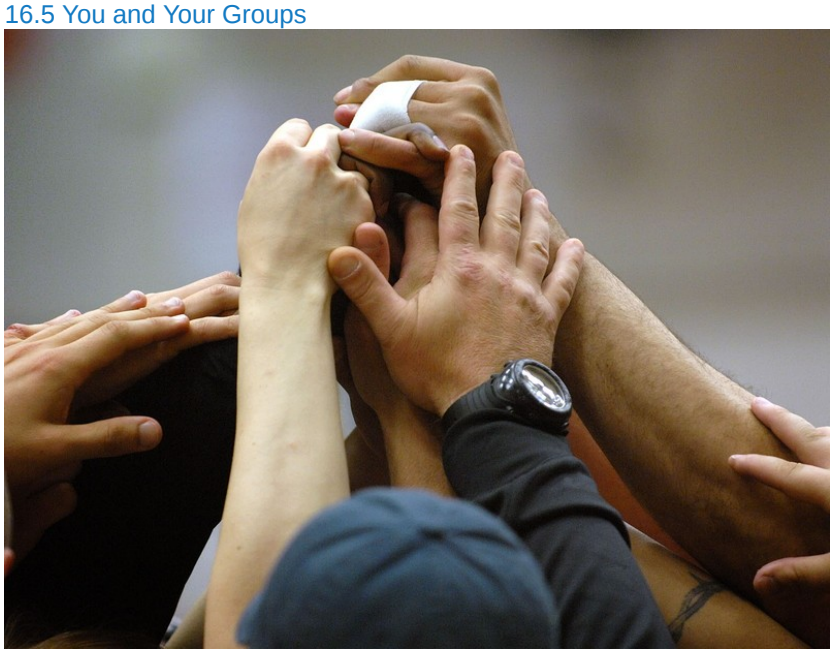
Janis identified both the telltale symptoms that signal the group is experiencing groupthink and the interpersonal factors that combine to cause groupthink. To Janis, groupthink is a disease that infects healthy groups, rendering them inefficient and unproductive. And like the physician who searches for symptoms that distinguish one disease from another, Janis identified a number of symptoms that should serve to warn members that they

may be falling prey to groupthink. These symptoms include overestimating the group's skills and wisdom, biased perceptions and evaluations of other groups and people who are outside of the group, strong conformity pressures within the group, and poor decision-making methods.

Janis also singled out four group-level factors that combine to cause groupthink: cohesion, isolation, biased leadership, and decisional stress.

- *Cohesion*: Groupthink only occurs in cohesive groups. Such groups have many advantages over groups that lack unity. People enjoy their membership much more in cohesive groups, they are less likely to abandon the group, and they work harder in pursuit of the group's goals. But extreme cohesiveness can be dangerous. When cohesiveness intensifies, members become more likely to accept the goals, decisions, and norms of the group without reservation. Conformity pressures also rise as members become reluctant to say or do anything that goes against the grain of the group, and the number of internal disagreements—necessary for good decision making—decreases.
- *Isolation.* Groupthink groups too often work behind closed doors, keeping out of the limelight. They isolate themselves from outsiders and refuse to modify their beliefs to bring them into line with society's beliefs. They avoid leaks by maintaining strict confidentiality and working only with people who are members of their group.
- *Biased leadership*. A biased leader who exerts too much authority over group members can increase conformity pressures and railroad decisions. In groupthink groups, the leader determines the agenda for each meeting, sets limits on discussion, and can even decide who will be heard.
- *Decisional stress.* Groupthink becomes more likely when the group is stressed, particularly by time pressures. When groups are stressed they minimize their discomfort by quickly choosing a plan of action with little argument or dissension. Then, through collective discussion, the group members can rationalize their choice by exaggerating the positive consequences, minimizing the possibility of negative outcomes, concentrating on minor details, and overlooking larger issues.

16.5 You and Your Groups



Even groups that like one another and work well together in most situations can be victims of groupthink or the common knowledge effect. But knowing that these pitfalls exist is the first step to overcoming them. [Image: CC0 Public Domain, goo.gl/m25gce]

Most of us belong to at least one group that must make decisions from time to time: a community group that needs to choose a fund-raising project; a union or employee group that must ratify a new contract; a family that must discuss your college plans; or the staff of a high school discussing ways to deal with the potential for violence during football games. Could these kinds of groups experience groupthink? Yes, they could, if the symptoms of groupthink discussed above are present, combined with other contributing causal factors, such as cohesiveness, isolation, biased leadership, and stress. To avoid polarization, the common knowledge effect, and groupthink, groups should strive to emphasize open inquiry of all sides of the issue while admitting the possibility of failure. The leaders of the group can also do much to limit groupthink by requiring full discussion of pros and cons, appointing devil's advocates, and breaking the group up into small discussion groups.

If these precautions are taken, your group has a much greater chance of making an informed, rational decision. Furthermore, although your group should review its goals, teamwork, and decision-making strategies, the human side of groups—the strong friendships and bonds that make group activity so enjoyable—shouldn't be overlooked. Groups have instrumental, practical value, but also emotional, psychological value. In groups, we find others who appreciate and value us. In groups, we gain the support we need in difficult times, but also have the opportunity to influence others. In groups, we find evidence of our self-worth, and secure ourselves from the threat of loneliness and despair. For most of us, groups are the secret source of well-being.

16.6 Outside Resources

Audio: This American Life. Episode 109 deals with the motivation and excitement of joining with others at summer camp.
Audio: This American Life. Episode 158 examines how people act when they are immersed in a large crowd.
Audio: This American Life. Episode 61 deals with fiascos, many of which are perpetrated by groups.

Audio: This American Life. Episode 74 examines how individuals act at conventions when they join with hundreds or thousands of other people who are similar in terms of their avocations or employment.

Forsyth, D. (2011). Group Dynamics. In R. Miller, E. Balcetis, S. Burns, D. Daniel, B. Saville, & W. Woody (Eds.), Promoting student engagement: Volume 2: Activities, exercises, and demonstrations for psychology courses. (pp. 28-32) Washington, DC: Society for the Teaching of Psychology, American Psychological Association.

Forsyth, D.R. (n.d.) Group Dynamics: Instructional Resources.

Journal Article: The Dynamogenic Factors in Pacemaking and Competition presents Norman Triplett's original paper on what would eventually be known as social facilitation.

Resources for the Teaching of Social Psychology.

Social Psychology Network Student Activities

Society for Social and Personality Psychology

Tablante, C. B., & Fiske, S. T. (2015). Teaching social class. Teaching of Psychology, 42, 184-190. doi:10.1177/0098628315573148 The article abstract can be viewed online. Visit your campus library to access the full-text version.

Video: Flash mobs illustrate the capacity of groups to organize quickly and complete complex tasks. One well-known example of a pseudo-flash mob is the rendition of "Do Re Mi" from the Sound of Music in the Central Station of Antwerp in 2009.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/humanbe/?p=89

Web: Group Development – This is a website developed by James Atherton that provides detailed information about group development, with application to the lifecycle of a typical college course.

Web: Group Dynamics– A general repository of links, short articles, and discussions examining groups and group processes, including such topics as crowd behavior, leadership, group structure, and influence.

Web: Stanford Crowd Project – This is a rich resource of information about all things related to crowds, with a particular emphasis on crowds and collective behavior in literature and the arts.

Working Paper: Law of Group Polarization, by Cass Sunstein, is a wide-ranging application of the concept of polarization to a variety of legal and political decisions.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

5.3: Group Dynamics

Topic hierarchy

5.3A: Effects of Group Size on Stability and Intimacy

5.3B: Effects of Group Size on Attitude and Behavior

5.3C: The Asch Experiment- The Power of Peer Pressure

5.3D: The Milgram Experiment- The Power of Authority

5.3E: Groupthink

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5.3A: Effects of Group Size on Stability and Intimacy

Since it is easier for fewer people to agree on goals and to coordinate their work, smaller groups are more cohesive than larger groups.

Learning Objectives

- Relate group size to group cohesiveness

Key Points

- A group is said to be in a state of cohesion when its members possess bonds linking them to one another and to the group as a whole.
- An intimate community is one in which some members recognize and are recognized by all of the others, and most of the members recognize and are recognized by many of the others. Relationships in intimate communities tend to be more stable and the groups more cohesive.
- Dunbar's number is the suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. It is usually estimated to be around 150, and this serves as an upper bound on the size of intimate communities.

Key Terms

- **dunbar's number**: Dunbar's number is a suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships.
- **cohesiveness**: The state of being cohesive.

A group is said to be in a state of cohesion when its members possess bonds linking them to one another and to the group as a whole. According to Festinger, Schachter, and Back (1950), group cohesion develops from a field of binding social forces that act on members to stay in the group. Groups that possess strong unifying forces typically stick together over time, whereas groups that lack such bonds between members usually disintegrate.

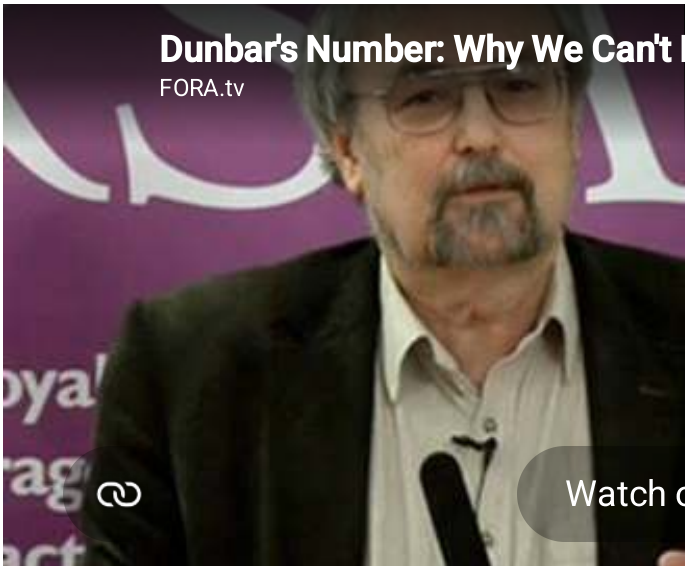
The Role of Group Size

Since it is easier for fewer people to agree on goals and to coordinate their work, smaller groups are often more cohesive than larger groups. Group cohesiveness may suffer, though, if the group lacks enough members to perform its tasks well.

An intimate community is one in which some members recognize and are recognized by all of the others, and most of the members recognize and are recognized by many of the others. This is in contrast to (usually larger) communities where members are known and interact mostly within their own subgroup, such as a neighborhood, department, or occupation. The contrast between the two types is illustrated by comparing hamlet with town, military company with battalion, parish church with diocese, or a country school with a huge urban one.

The Limits of Group Size

Intimate communities seldom have more than about 150 members, a number derived from the "Dunbar's Number" concept. This is the suggested cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. These are relationships in which an individual knows who each person is, and how each person relates to every other person. While no precise value has been unanimously agreed upon, it has been proposed to lie between 100 and 230, with a commonly used value of 150. The concept is based on studies of social animals, which have shown a correlation between the typical frontal brain capacity the members of a species has and the maximum size of the groups in which they live. Like animals, the number of relationships the human brain can handle is large but not unlimited.



Dunbar's Number: Dr. Robin Dunbar explains the concept of Dunbar's number.

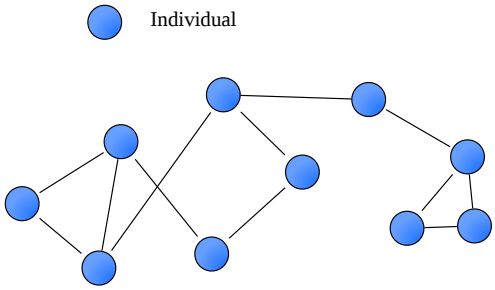


Diagram of a Network: Individuals in groups are connected to each other by social relationships.

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5.3B: Effects of Group Size on Attitude and Behavior

Size (number of people involved) is an important characteristic of groups, organizations and communities in which social behavior occurs.

Learning Objectives

- Describe Georg Simmel's view on group size

Key Points

- A social group has been defined as two or more humans who interact with one another, share similar characteristics and collectively have a sense of unity. Groups can be categorized according to size.
- Individual behavior has been shown to be influenced by the presence of others. For example, an individual's performance at work or the individual's decision-making processes (as in the term "groupthink").
- Dyads and triads are the smallest social groups. Social interaction in a dyad is typically more intense because neither member shares the other's attention with anyone else. A triad is more stable because one member can act as a mediator if the relationship between the other two become strained.
- As an organization or community grows in size it is apt to experience changes in the way it operates. As the size of a group increases, the need for more organization or leadership also becomes more obvious.
- German sociologist Georg Simmel argued that as the group becomes greater, the individual becomes separated and grows more alone, isolated and segmented. Simmel's view was somewhat ambiguous with respect to group size's affect on the individual.

Key Terms

- **social group**: A collection of humans or animals that share certain characteristics, interact with one another, accept expectations and obligations as members of the group, and share a common identity.
- **impersonal**: Lacking warmth or emotion; cold.
- **dyad**: A pair of things standing in particular relation; dyadic relation.
- **triad**: a group of three people

In the social sciences a social group is defined as two or more humans who interact with one another, share similar characteristics and collectively have a sense of unity. Social groups come in a myriad of sizes and varieties. Groups can also be categorized in various ways, one of which is according to the number of people present within the group. This makes sense if the size of the group has consequences for the way group members relate with each other.

Individual behavior deviates substantially in a group setting; therefore, it is difficult to determine group behavior by looking solely at the individuals that comprise the group. Group attitudes and behavior depend upon several variables: size, structure, the purpose that the group serves, group development and various influences upon a group. Group dynamics refers to a system of behaviors and psychological processes occurring within a social group or between social groups. Individual behavior has been shown to be influenced by the presence of others. For example, an individual's performance at work or the individual's decision-making processes (as in the term "groupthink").

Effects of Group Size

Size (the number of people involved) is an important characteristic of groups, organizations and communities in which social behavior occurs.

Dyads and triads are the smallest social groups. Social interaction in a dyad is typically more intense than in larger groups because neither member shares the other's attention with anyone else. A triad is more stable than a dyad because one member can act as a mediator should the relationship between the other two become strained.

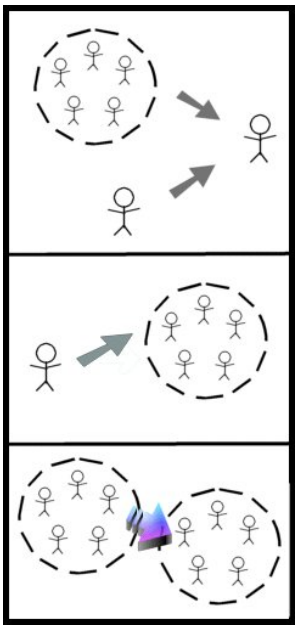
As an organization or community grows in size it is apt to experience tipping points where the way it operates needs to change. The complexity of large groupings is partly because they are made up of interrelated subgroups. As the size of a group increases, the need for more organization or leadership also often becomes more obvious.



Crowds and Large Groups: This large group may share some traits (such as enjoyment of the concert that the crowd just witnessed), but likely vary in many other traits. Large groups introduce diversity of attitudes and behaviors.

German sociologist Georg Simmel argued that as the group becomes greater, the individual becomes separated and grows more alone, isolated and segmented. Simmel's view was somewhat ambiguous with respect to group size. On one hand,

he believed that the bigger the group the better for the individual. In a larger group it would be harder to exert control on an individual, but there is a possibility of the individual becoming distant and impersonal.



Studying Group Attitudes and Behaviors: Sociologists study interactions within groups, and between both groups and individuals.

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5.3C: The Asch Experiment- The Power of Peer Pressure

The Asch conformity experiments were a series of studies conducted in the 1950s that demonstrated the power of conformity in groups.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how the Asch experiment sought to measure conformity in groups

Key Points

- The Asch conformity experiments consisted of a group "vision test", where study participants were found to be more likely to conform to obviously wrong answers if first given by other "participants", who were actually working for the experimenter.
- The experiment found that over a third of subjects conformed to giving a wrong answer.
- In terms of gender, males show around half the effect of females (tested in same-sex groups). Conformity is also higher among members of an in-group.

Key Terms

- **conformity**: the ideology of adhering to one standard or social uniformity

Conducted by social psychologist Solomon Asch of Swarthmore College, the Asch conformity experiments were a series of studies published in the 1950s that demonstrated the power of conformity in groups. They are also known as the Asch paradigm. In the experiment, students were asked to participate in a group "vision test. " In reality, all but one of the participants were working for Asch (i.e. confederates), and the study was really about how the remaining student would react to their behavior.

Method

The original experiment was conducted with 123 male participants. Each participant was put into a group with five to seven confederates. The participants were shown a card with a line on it (the reference line), followed by another card with three lines on it labeled a, b, and c. The participants were then asked to say out loud which of the three lines matched in length the reference line, as well as other responses such as the length of the reference line to an everyday object, which lines were the same length, and so on.

Each line question was called a "trial. " The "real" participant answered last or next to last. For the first two trials, the subject would feel at ease in the experiment, as he and the other "participants" gave the obvious, correct answer. On the third trial, all the confederates would start giving the same wrong answer. There were 18 trials in total and the confederates answered incorrectly for 12 of them. These 12 were known as the "critical trials. "

The aim was to see whether the real participants would conform to the wrong answers of the confederates and change their answer to respond in the same way, despite it being the wrong answer.

Results

Dr. Asch thought that the majority of people would not conform to something obviously wrong, but the results showed that only 24% of the participants did not conform on any trial. Seventy five percent conformed at least once, 5% conformed every time, and when surrounded by individuals all voicing an incorrect answer, participants provided incorrect responses on a high proportion of the questions (32%). Overall, there was a 37% conformity rate by subjects averaged across all critical trials. In a control group, with no pressure to conform to an erroneous answer, only one subject out of 35 ever gave an incorrect answer.

Study Variations

Variations of the basic paradigm tested how many cohorts were necessary to induce conformity, examining the influence of just one cohort and as many as fifteen. Results indicated that one cohort has virtually no influence and two cohorts have only a small influence. When three or more cohorts are present, the tendency to conform increases only modestly. The maximum effect occurs with four cohorts. Adding additional cohorts does not produce a stronger effect.

In terms of gender, males show around half the effect of females (tested in same-sex groups). Conformity is also higher among members of an in-group.

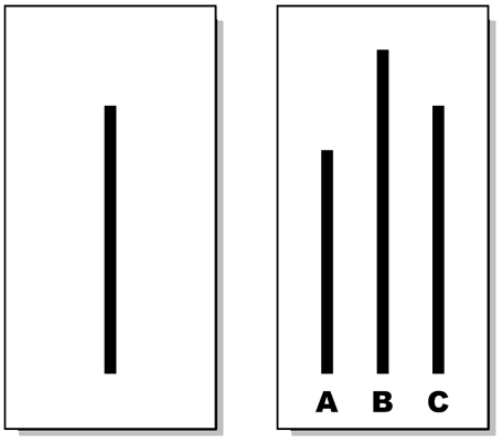
The unanimity of the confederates has also been varied. When the confederates are not unanimous in their judgment, even if only one confederate voices a different opinion, participants are much more likely to resist the urge to conform (only 5% to 10% conform) than when the confederates all agree. This result holds whether or not the dissenting confederate gives the correct answer. As long as the dissenting confederate gives an answer that is different from the majority, participants are more likely to give the correct answer.

This finding illuminates the power that even a small dissenting minority can have upon a larger group. This demonstrates the importance of privacy in answering important and life-changing questions, so that people do not feel pressured to conform. For example, anonymous surveys can allow people to fully express how they feel about a particular subject without fear of retribution or retaliation from others in the group or the larger society. Having a witness or ally (someone who agrees with the

point of view) also makes it less likely that conformity will occur.

Interpretations

Asch suggested that this reflected poorly on factors such as education, which he thought must over-train conformity. Other researchers have argued that it is rational to use other people's judgments as evidence. Others have suggested that the high conformity rate was due to social norms regarding politeness, which is consistent with subjects' own claims that they did not actually believe the others' judgments and were indeed merely conforming.



Asch Experiment: One of the pairs of cards used in the experiment. The card on the left has the reference line and the one on the right shows the three comparison lines.

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5.3D: The Milgram Experiment- The Power of Authority

The Milgram experiment found that most people are willing to obey authority figures over their personal objections.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss two interpretations of the results of the Milgram experiment

Key Points

- The Milgram experiment on obedience to authority figures was a series of notable social psychology experiments conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram in the 1960s.
- The Milgram experiment investigated whether study participants would obey commands to administer increasingly painful "shocks" to other particpants who were actually actors only pretending to be shocked.
- The original experiment found that 65 percent of participants deferred to the authority of the experimenter and administered the final 450 volt "shock".

Key Terms

- **authority figures**: A person that displays a form or a symbol of authority.
- **milgram experiment**: It was a series of notable social psychology experiments conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram in the 1960s. It measured the willingness of study participants to obey an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts that conflicted with their personal conscience.

The Milgram experiment—based on obedience to authority figures—was a series of notable social psychology experiments conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram in the 1960s. It measured the willingness of study participants to obey an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts that conflicted with their personal conscience.

Milgram devised his psychological study to answer the question of whether the millions participating in the Holocaust actually consciously shared the intent of its genocidal goals. Milgram's experiments suggested that the millions of accomplices were merely following orders, despite violating their moral beliefs.

The Milgram Experiment was also quite controversial, and considered by many scientists to be unethical and physically or psychologically abusive, motivating more thorough review boards and committee reviews for research with human subjects.

The Experiment

The volunteer subject used a list of word pairs to play the role of "teacher" with another participant, the "learner". In reality, the learner was a confederate working for the experimenter and only acting as a participant. The naïve participants drew slips of paper to determine their roles, but unknown to them, both slips said "teacher," and the confederate always claimed to have the slip that read "learner. " At this point, the "teacher" and "learner" were separated into different rooms where they could communicate but not see each other.

The teacher began by reading the list of word pairs to the learner. They would read the first word of each pair and four possible answers. The learner would press a button to indicate his response. If the answer was incorrect, the teacher was instructed administer an electric shock to the learner, with the voltage increasing in 15-volt increments for each wrong answer. If correct, the teacher would read the next word pair.

The teacher was given an electric shock from the electro-shock generator as a sample of the shock that the "learner" would supposedly receive during the experiment. The subjects believed that for each wrong answer, the learner was receiving actual shocks. In reality, there were no shocks. After the confederate was separated from the subject, the confederate set up a tape recorder integrated with the electro-shock generator, which played pre-recorded sounds for each shock level.

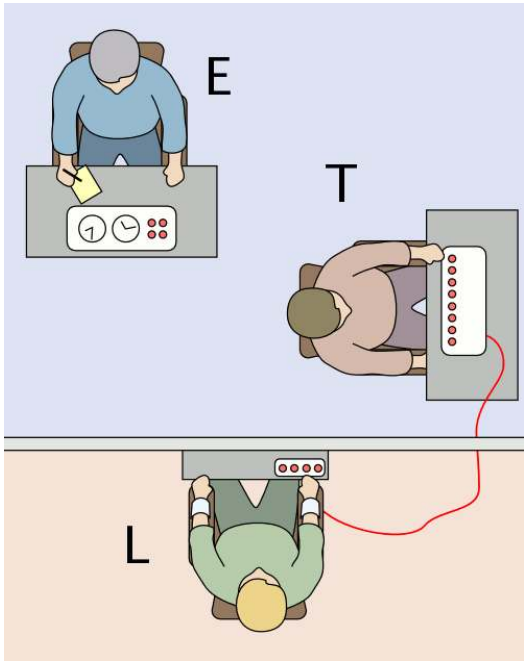
In one version of the experiment, the confederate told the participant that he had a heart condition. After a number of voltage level increases, the confederate started to bang on the wall that separated them from the participant. After several times banging on the wall and complaining about their heart condition, all responses by the learner would cease.

At this point, many people indicated their desire to stop the experiment and check on the learner. Some test subjects paused at 135 volts and began to question the purpose of the experiment. Most continued after being assured that they would not be held responsible.

If at any time the subject indicated his desire to halt the experiment, he was given a succession of verbal prods by the experimenter, in this order:

1. Please continue.
2. The experiment requires that you continue.
3. It is absolutely essential that you continue.
4. You have no other choice, you must go on.

If the subject still wished to stop after all four successive verbal prods, the experiment was halted. Otherwise, it was halted after the subject had given the maximum 450-volt shock three times in succession.



The Milgram Experiment Setup: The experimenter (E) orders the teacher (T), the subject of the experiment, to give what the latter believes are painful electric shocks to a learner (L), who is actually an actor and confederate. The subject believes that for each wrong answer, the learner was receiving actual electric shocks, though in reality there were no such punishments. Being separated from the subject, the confederate set up a tape recorder integrated with the electro-shock generator, which played pre-recorded sounds for each shock level.

Results

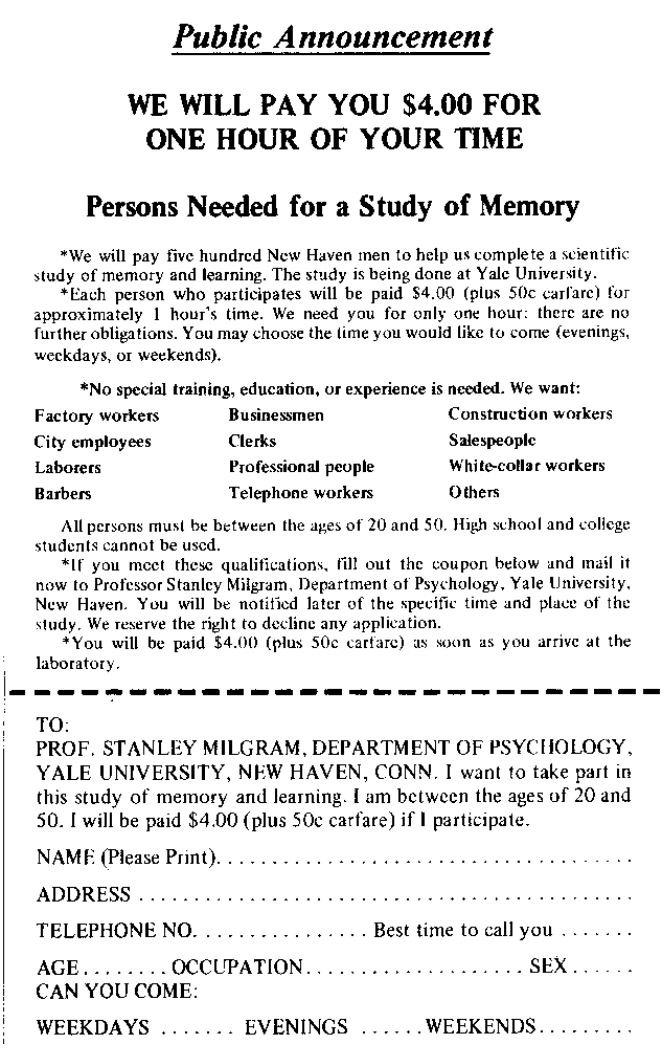
Before conducting the experiment, Milgram polled fourteen Yale University senior-year psychology majors to predict the behavior of 100 hypothetical teachers. All of the poll respondents believed that only a very small fraction of teachers would be prepared to inflict the maximum voltage.

In Milgram's first set of experiments, 65 percent (26 of 40) of experiment participants administered the experiment's final massive 450-volt shock, though many were very uncomfortable doing so. At some point, every participant paused and questioned the experiment, some saying they would refund the money they were paid for participating in the experiment.

Interpretations

Professor Milgram elaborated two theories explaining his results:

- The first is the theory of conformism, based on the Solomon Asch conformity experiments, describing the fundamental relationship between the group of reference and the individual person. It states that a subject who has neither ability nor expertise to make decisions, especially in a crisis, will leave decision making to the group and its hierarchy.
- The second is the agentic state theory, where, according to Milgram, "the essence of obedience consists in the fact that a person comes to view themselves as the instrument for carrying out another person's wishes, and they therefore no longer see themselves as responsible for their actions…"



Public Announcement

WE WILL PAY YOU $4.00 FOR ONE HOUR OF YOUR TIME

Persons Needed for a Study of Memory

*We will pay five hundred New Haven men to help us complete a scientific study of memory and learning. The study is being done at Yale University.

*Each person who participates will be paid $4.00 (plus 50c carfare) for approximately 1 hour's time. We need you for only one hour: there are no further obligations. You may choose the time you would like to come (evenings, weekdays, or weekends).

*No special training, education, or experience is needed. We want:

Factory workers	Businessmen	Construction workers
City employees	Clerks	Salespeople
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All persons must be between the ages of 20 and 50. High school and college students cannot be used.

*If you meet these qualifications, fill out the coupon below and mail it now to Professor Stanley Milgram, Department of Psychology, Yale University, New Haven. You will be notified later of the specific time and place of the study. We reserve the right to decline any application.

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Milgram Experiment Advertisement: Image of the original advertisement posted to solicit study participants for the Milgram experiment.

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5.3E: Groupthink

In groupthink, each member of the group attempts to conform his or her opinions to what he or she believes is the consensus of the group.

Learning Objectives

Explain why groupthink occurs and how it can be minimized

"Groupthink" is a term coined by Yale research psychologist Irving Janis to describe a process by which a group can make poor or irrational decisions.

In a groupthink situation, each member of the group attempts to conform his or her opinions to what they believe to be the consensus of the group. While this may seem like a rational approach to decision making, it can result in the group ultimately agreeing upon an action that each member individually might consider to be unwise.

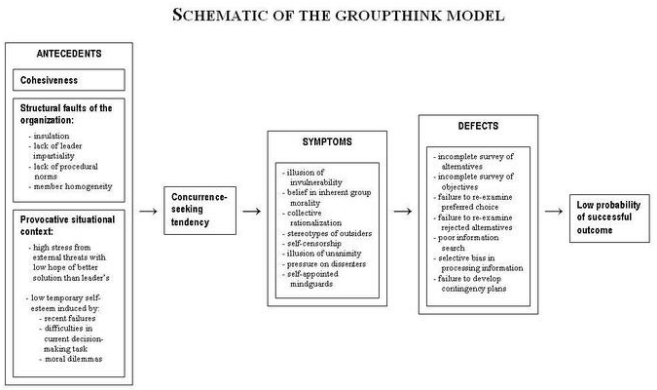
Janis originally defined the term as "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action. " The word "groupthink" was intended to be reminiscent of George Orwell's coinages in his novel, *1984*, from the fictional language Newspeak, such as "doublethink" and "duckspeak. "

Groupthink tends to occur on committees and in large organizations, and Janis originally studied the groupthink phenomena in historical cases, such as the Pearl Harbor bombing, the Vietnam War, and the Bay of Pigs Invasion.

Managing Groupthink

Management consultants often recommend putting in place a variety of mechamisms to minimize groupthink. One common method is to place responsibility and authority for a decision in the hands of a single person who can turn to others for advice. Another mechanism is to pre-select an individual to take the role of disagreeing with any suggestion presented. This makes other individuals more likely to present their own ideas and point out flaws in others and reduces the stigma associated with being the first to take negative stances.

Anonymous feedback via a suggestion box or online chat has also been found to be a useful remedy for groupthink. Negative or dissenting views of proposals can be raised without any individual being identifiable by others as having lodged a critique. In this way, group solidarity is preserved, as all members have plausible deniability that they raised a dissenting point.



Schematic of the Groupthink Model: A schematic of the groupthink model based on Irving Janis's research

Key Points

- " Groupthink " is a term coined by Yale research psychologist Irving Janis.
- Groupthink describes a process by which a group can make poor or irrational decisions.
- Groupthink tends to occur on committees and in large organizations.

Key Terms

- **consensus**: A process of decision making that seeks widespread agreement among group members.
- **groupthink**: A process of reasoning or decision making by a group, especially one characterized by uncritical acceptance or conformity to a perceived majority view.

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5.4: Group Size and Structure

Dyads, Triads, and Large Groups

A small group is typically one where the collection of people is small enough that all members of the group know each other and share simultaneous interaction, such as a nuclear family, a dyad, or a triad. Georg Simmel (1858–1915) wrote extensively about the difference between a dyad, or two-member group, and a triad, which is a three-member group (Simmel 1902). In the former, if one person withdraws, the group can no longer exist. We can think of a divorce, which effectively ends the "group" of the married couple or of two best friends never speaking again. In a triad, however, the dynamic is quite different. If one person withdraws, the group lives on. A triad has a different set of relationships. If there are three in the group, two-against-one dynamics can develop, and there exists the potential for a majority opinion on any issue. Small groups generally have strong internal cohesiveness and a sense of connection. The challenge, however, is for small groups to achieve large goals. They can struggle to be heard or to be a force for change if they are pushing against larger groups. In short, they are easier to ignore.

It is difficult to define exactly when a small group becomes a large group. Perhaps it occurs when there are too many people to join in a simultaneous discussion. Or perhaps a group joins with other groups as part of a movement that unites them. These larger groups may share a geographic space, such as a fraternity or sorority on the same campus, or they might be spread out around the globe. The larger the group, the more attention it can garner, and the more pressure members can put toward whatever goal they wish to achieve. At the same time, the larger the group becomes, the more the risk grows for division and lack of cohesion.



Cadets illustrate how strongly conformity can define groups. (Photo courtesy David Spender/flickr)

Group Leadership

Often, larger groups require some kind of leadership. In small, primary groups, leadership tends to be informal. After all, most families don't take a vote on who will rule the group, nor do most groups of friends. This is not to say that *de facto* leaders don't emerge, but formal leadership is rare. In secondary groups, leadership is usually more overt. There are often clearly outlined roles and responsibilities, with a chain of command to follow. Some secondary groups, like the military, have highly structured and clearly understood chains of command, and many lives depend on those. After all, how well could soldiers function in a battle if they had no idea whom to listen to or if different people were calling out orders? Other secondary groups, like a workplace or a classroom, also have formal leaders, but the styles and functions of leadership can vary significantly.

Leadership function refers to the main focus or goal of the leader. An instrumental leader is one who is goal-oriented and largely concerned with accomplishing set tasks. We can imagine that an army general or a Fortune 500 CEO would be an instrumental leader. In contrast, expressive leaders are more concerned with promoting emotional strength and health, and ensuring that people feel supported. Social and religious leaders—rabbis, priests, imams, directors of youth homes and social service programs—are often perceived as expressive leaders. There is a longstanding stereotype that men are more instrumental leaders, and women are more expressive leaders. And although gender roles have changed, even today many women and men who exhibit the opposite-gender manner can be seen as deviants and can encounter resistance. Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's experiences provide an example of the way society reacts to a high-profile woman who is an instrumental leader. Despite the stereotype, Boatwright and Forrest (2000) have found that both men and women prefer leaders who use a combination of expressive and instrumental leadership.

In addition to these leadership functions, there are three different leadership styles. Democratic leaders encourage group participation in all decision making. They work hard to build consensus before choosing a course of action and moving forward. This type of leader is particularly common, for example, in a club where the members vote on which activities or projects to pursue. Democratic leaders can be well liked, but there is often a danger that they will proceed slowly since consensus building is time-consuming. A further risk is that group members might pick sides and entrench themselves into opposing factions rather than reaching a solution. In contrast, a laissez-faire leader (French for "leave it alone") is hands-off, allowing group members to self-manage and make their own decisions. An example of this kind of leader might be an art teacher who opens the art cupboard, leaves materials on the shelves, and tells students to help themselves and make some art. While this style can work well with highly motivated and mature participants who have clear goals and guidelines, it risks group dissolution and a lack of progress. As the name suggests, authoritarian leaders issue orders and assigns tasks. These leaders are clear instrumental leaders with a strong focus on meeting goals. Often, entrepreneurs fall into this mold, like Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Not surprisingly, the authoritarian leader risks alienating the workers. There are times, however, when this style of leadership can be required. In different circumstances, each of these leadership styles can be effective and successful. Consider what leadership style you prefer. Why? Do you like the same style in different areas of your life, such as a classroom, a workplace, and a sports team?

WOMEN LEADERS AND THE HILLARY CLINTON/SARAH PALIN PHENOMENON

The 2008 presidential election marked a dynamic change when two female politicians entered the race. Of the 200 people who have run for president during the country's history, fewer than thirty have been women. Democratic presidential candidate and former First Lady Hillary Clinton was both famously polarizing and popular. She had almost as many passionate supporters as she did people who reviled her.

On the other side of the aisle was Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin. The former governor of Alaska, Palin was, to some, the perfect example of the modern woman. She juggled her political career with raising a growing family and relied heavily on the use of social media to spread her message.



Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton drew fire for her leadership style. (Photo courtesy marcn/flickr)

So what light did these candidates' campaigns shed on the possibilities of a female presidency? According to some political analysts, women candidates face a paradox: They must be as tough as their male opponents on issues such as foreign policy, or they risk appearing weak. However, the stereotypical expectation of women as expressive leaders is still prevalent. Consider that Hillary Clinton's popularity surged in her 2008 campaign after she cried on the campaign trail. It was enough for the *New York Times* to publish an editorial, "Can Hillary Cry Her Way Back to the White House?" (Dowd 2008). Harsh, but her approval ratings soared afterward. In fact, many compared it to how politically likable she was in the aftermath of President Clinton's Monica Lewinsky scandal. Sarah Palin's expressive qualities were promoted to a greater degree. While she has benefited from the efforts of feminists before her, she self-identified as a traditional woman with traditional values, a point she illustrated by frequently bringing her young children up on stage with her.



This gag gift demonstrates how female leaders may be viewed if they violate social norms. (Photo courtesy of istolethetv/flickr)

So what does this mean for women who would be president, and for those who would vote for them? On the positive side, a recent study of eighteen- to twenty-five-year-old women that asked whether female candidates in the 2008 election made them believe a woman would be president during their lifetime found that the majority thought they would (Weeks 2011). And the more that young women demand female candidates, the more commonplace female contenders will become. Women as presidential candidates may no longer be a novelty with the focus of their campaign, no matter how obliquely, on their gender. Some, however, remain skeptical. As one political analyst said bluntly, "Women don't succeed in politics—or other professions—unless they act like men. The standard for running for national office remains distinctly male" (Weeks 2011).

Conformity

We all like to fit in to some degree. Likewise, when we want to stand out, we want to choose how we stand out and for what reasons. For example, a woman who loves cutting-edge fashion and wants to dress in thought-provoking new styles likely wants to be noticed, but most likely she will want to be noticed within a framework of high fashion. She wouldn't want people to think she was too poor to find proper clothes. Conformity is the extent to which an individual complies with group norms or expectations. As you might recall, we use reference groups to assess and understand how to act, to dress, and to behave. Not surprisingly, young people are particularly aware of who conforms and who does not. A high school boy whose mother makes him wear ironed button-down shirts might protest that he will look stupid—that everyone else wears T-shirts. Another high school boy might like wearing those shirts as a way of standing out. How much do you enjoy being noticed? Do you consciously prefer to conform to group norms so as not to be singled out? Are there people in your class who immediately come to mind when you think about those who don't want to conform?

Psychologist Solomon Asch (1907–1996) conducted experiments that illustrated how great the pressure to conform is, specifically within a small group (1956). After reading about his work in the Sociological Research feature, ask yourself what you would do in Asch's experiment. Would you speak up? What would help you speak up and what would discourage it?

CONFORMING TO EXPECTATIONS

In 1951, psychologist Solomon Asch sat a small group of about eight people around a table. Only one of the people sitting there was the true subject; the rest were associates of the experimenter. However, the subject was led to believe that the others were all, like him, people brought in for an experiment in visual judgments. The group was shown two cards, the first card with a single vertical line, and the second card with three vertical lines differing in length. The experimenter polled the group and asked each participant one at a time which line on the second card matched up with the line on the first card.

However, this was not really a test of visual judgment. Rather, it was Asch's study on the pressures of conformity. He was curious to see what the effect of multiple wrong answers would be on the subject, who presumably was able to tell which lines matched. In order to test this, Asch had each planted respondent answer in a specific way. The subject was seated in such a way that he had to hear almost everyone else's answers before it was his turn. Sometimes the nonsubject members would unanimously choose an answer that was clearly wrong.

So what was the conclusion? Asch found that thirty-seven out of fifty test subjects responded with an "obviously erroneous" answer at least once. When faced by a unanimous wrong answer from the rest of the group, the subject conformed to a mean of four of the staged answers. Asch revised the study and repeated it, wherein the subject still heard the staged wrong answers, but

was allowed to write down his answer rather than speak it aloud. In this version, the number of examples of conformity—giving an incorrect answer so as not to contradict the group—fell by two thirds. He also found that group size had an impact on how much pressure the subject felt to conform.

The results showed that speaking up when only one other person gave an erroneous answer was far more common than when five or six people defended the incorrect position. Finally, Asch discovered that people were far more likely to give the correct answer in the face of near-unanimous consent if they had a single ally. If even one person in the group also dissented, the subject conformed only a quarter as often. Clearly, it was easier to be a minority of two than a minority of one.

Asch concluded that there are two main causes for conformity: people want to be liked by the group or they believe the group is better informed than they are. He found his study results disturbing. To him, they revealed that intelligent, well-educated people would, with very little coaxing, go along with an untruth. He believed this result highlighted real problems with the education system and values in our society (Asch 1956).

Stanley Milgram, a Yale psychologist, had similar results in his experiment that is now known simply as the Milgram Experiment. In 1962, Milgram found that research subjects were overwhelmingly willing to perform acts that directly conflicted with their consciences when directed by a person of authority. In the experiment, subjects were willing to administer painful, even supposedly deadly, shocks to others who answered questions incorrectly.

To learn more about similar research, visit http://www.prisonexp.org/ and read an account of Philip Zimbardo's prison experiment conducted at Stanford University in 1971.

Summary

The size and dynamic of a group greatly affects how members act. Primary groups rarely have formal leaders, although there can be informal leadership. Groups generally are considered large when there are too many members for a simultaneous discussion. In secondary groups there are two types of leadership functions, with expressive leaders focused on emotional health and wellness, and instrumental leaders more focused on results. Further, there are different leadership styles: democratic leaders, authoritarian leaders, and laissez-faire leaders.

Within a group, conformity is the extent to which people want to go along with the norm. A number of experiments have illustrated how strong the drive to conform can be. It is worth considering real-life examples of how conformity and obedience can lead people to ethically and morally suspect acts.

Section Quiz

Two people who have just had a baby have turned from a _____ to a _____.

1. primary group; secondary group
2. dyad; triad
3. couple; family
4. de facto group; nuclear family

Who is more likely to be an expressive leader?

1. The sales manager of a fast-growing cosmetics company
2. A high school teacher at a reform school
3. The director of a summer camp for chronically ill children
4. A manager at a fast-food restaurant

Which of the following is *not* an appropriate group for democratic leadership?

1. A fire station
2. A college classroom
3. A high school prom committee
4. A homeless shelter

In Asch's study on conformity, what contributed to the ability of subjects to resist conforming?

1. A very small group of witnesses
2. The presence of an ally

3. The ability to keep one's answer private
4. All of the above

Which type of group leadership has a communication pattern that flows from the top down?

1. Authoritarian
2. Democratic
3. Laissez-faire
4. Expressive

Answers

(1:B, 2:C, 3:A, 4:D, 5:A)

Short Answer

Think of a scenario where an authoritarian leadership style would be beneficial. Explain. What are the reasons it would work well? What are the risks?

Describe a time you were led by a leader using, in your opinion, a leadership style that didn't suit the situation. When and where was it? What could she or he have done better?

Imagine you are in Asch's study. Would you find it difficult to give the correct answer in that scenario? Why or why not? How would you change the study now to improve it?

What kind of leader do you tend to be? Do you embrace different leadership styles and functions as the situation changes? Give an example of a time you were in a position of leadership and what function and style you expressed.

Further Research

What is your leadership style? The website http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Leadership offers a quiz to help you find out!

Explore other experiments on conformity at http://openstaxcollege.org/l/Stanford-Prison

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Glossary

authoritarian leader

a leader who issues orders and assigns tasks

conformity

the extent to which an individual complies with group or societal norms

democratic leader

a leader who encourages group participation and consensus-building before moving into action

dyad
a two-member group

expressive leader
a leader who is concerned with process and with ensuring everyone's emotional wellbeing

instrumental leader
a leader who is goal oriented with a primary focus on accomplishing tasks

laissez-faire leader
a hands-off leader who allows members of the group to make their own decisions

leadership function
the main focus or goal of a leader

leadership style
the style a leader uses to achieve goals or elicit action from group members

triad
a three-member group

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5.5: Group Dynamics and Behavior

Learning Objectives

- Explain how and why group dynamics change as groups grow in size.
- Describe the different types of leaders and leadership styles.
- Be familiar with experimental evidence on group conformity.
- Explain how groupthink develops and why its development may lead to negative consequences.

Social scientists have studied how people behave in groups and how groups affect their behavior, attitudes, and perceptions (Gastil, 2009).Gastil, J. (2009). *The group in society*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Their research underscores the importance of groups for social life, but it also points to the dangerous influences groups can sometimes have on their members.

The Importance of Group Size

The distinction made earlier between small primary groups and larger secondary groups reflects the importance of group size for the functioning of a group, the nature of its members' attachments, and the group's stability. If you have ever taken a very small class, say fewer than 15 students, you probably noticed that the class atmosphere differed markedly from that of a large lecture class you may have been in. In the small class, you got to know the professor better, and the students in the room got to know each other better. Attendance in the small class was probably more regular than in the large lecture class.

Over the years, sociologists and other scholars have studied the effects of group size on group dynamics. One of the first to do so was German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918), who discussed the effects of groups of different sizes. The smallest group, of course, is the two-person group, or dyad, such as a married couple or two people engaged to be married or at least dating steadily. In this smallest of groups, Simmel noted, relationships can be very intense emotionally (as you might know from personal experience) but also very unstable and short lived: if one person ends the relationship, the dyad ends as well.



Figure 4.5: The smallest group is the two-person group, or dyad. Dyad relationships can be very intense emotionally but also unstable and short lived. Why is this so?© Thinkstock

A triad, or three-person group, involves relationships that are still fairly intense, but it is also more stable than a dyad. A major reason for this, said Simmel, is that if two people in a triad have a dispute, the third member can help them reach some compromise that will satisfy all the triad members. The downside of a triad is that two of its members may become very close and increasingly disregard the third member. As one example, some overcrowded college dorms are forced to house students in triples, or three to a room. In such a situation, suppose that two of the roommates are night owls and like to stay up very late, while the third wants lights out by 11:00 p.m. If majority rules, as well it might, the third roommate will feel very dissatisfied and may decide to try to find other roommates.

As groups become larger, the intensity of their interaction and bonding decreases, but their stability increases. The major reason for this is the sheer number of relationships that can exist in a larger group. For example, in a dyad only one relationship exists, that between the two members of the dyad. In a triad (say composed of members A, B, and C), three relationships exist: A-B, A-C, and B-C. In a four-person group, the number of relationships rises to six: A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, and C-D. In a five-person group, 10 relationships exist, and in a six-person group, 15 exist (see Table 4.1). As the number of possible relationships rises, the amount of time a group member can spend with any other group member must decline, and with this decline comes less intense interaction

and weaker emotional bonds. But as group size increases, the group also becomes more stable because it is large enough to survive any one member's departure from the group. When you graduate from your college or university, any clubs, organizations, or sports teams to which you belong will continue despite your exit, no matter how important you were to the group, as the remaining members of the group and new recruits will carry on in your absence.

Table 4.1: Number of Two-Person Relationships in Groups of Different Sizes

Number of members	Number of relationships
2 (A, B)	1 (A-B)
3 (A, B, C)	3 (A-B, A-C, B-C)
4 (A, B, C, D)	6 (A-B, A-C, A-D, B-C, B-D, C-D)
5 (A, B, C, D, E)	10 (A-B, A-C, A-D, A-E, B-C, B-D, B-E, C-D, C-E, D-E)
6 (A, B, C, D, E, F)	15 (A-B, A-C, A-D, A-E, A-F, B-C, B-D, B-E, B-F, C-D, C-E, C-F, D-E, D-F, E-F)

Group Leadership and Decision Making

Most groups have leaders. In the family, of course, the parents are the leaders, as much as their children sometimes might not like that. Even some close friendship groups have a leader or two who emerge over time. Virtually all secondary groups have leaders. These groups often have a charter, operations manual, or similar document that stipulates how leaders are appointed or elected and what their duties are.

Sociologists commonly distinguish two types of leaders, instrumental and expressive. An instrumental leader is a leader whose main focus is to achieve group goals and accomplish group tasks. Often instrumental leaders try to carry out their role even if they alienate other members of the group. The second type is the expressive leader, whose main focus is to maintain and improve the quality of relationships among group members and more generally to ensure group harmony. Some groups may have both types of leaders.

Related to the leader types is leadership *style*. Three such styles are commonly distinguished. The first, authoritarian leadership, involves a primary focus on achieving group goals and on rigorous compliance with group rules and penalties for noncompliance. Authoritarian leaders typically make decisions on their own and tell other group members what to do and how to do it. The second style, democratic leadership, involves extensive consultation with group members on decisions and less emphasis on rule compliance. Democratic leaders still make the final decision but do so only after carefully considering what other group members have said, and usually their decision will agree with the views of a majority of the members. The final style is laissez-faire leadership. Here the leader more or less sits back and lets the group function on its own and really exerts no leadership role.

When a decision must be reached, laissez-faire leadership is less effective than the other two in helping a group get things done. Whether authoritarian or democratic leadership is better for a group depends on the group's priorities. If the group values task accomplishment more than anything else, including how well group members get along and how much they like their leader, then authoritarian leadership is preferable to democratic leadership, as it is better able to achieve group goals quickly and efficiently. But if group members place their highest priority on their satisfaction with decisions and decision making in the group, then they would want to have a lot of input in decisions. In this case, democratic leadership is preferable to authoritarian leadership.

Some small groups shun leadership and instead try to operate by *consensus*. In this model of decision making popularized by Quakers (Brown, 2009), no decision is made unless all group members agree with it. If even one member disagrees, the group keeps discussing the issue until it reaches a compromise that satisfies everyone. If the person disagreeing does not feel very strongly about the issue or does not wish to prolong the discussion, she or he may agree to "stand aside" and let the group make the decision despite the lack of total consensus. But if this person refuses to stand aside, no decision may be possible.

A major advantage of the consensus style of decision making is psychic. Because everyone has a chance to voice an opinion about a potential decision and no decisions are reached unless everyone agrees with them, group members will ordinarily feel good about the eventual decision and also about being in the group. The major disadvantage has to do with time and efficiency. When groups operate by consensus, their discussions may become long and tedious, as no voting is allowed and discussion must continue until everyone is satisfied with the outcome. This means the group may well be unable to make decisions quickly and efficiently.



Figure 4.6: Some small groups operate by consensus instead of having a leader guiding or mandating their decision making. This model of decision making was popularized by the Society of Friends (Quakers). Source: Photo courtesy of Guy Noir, http://flickr.com/photos/16698255@N00/25305949.

One final issue in leadership has to do with gender differences in leadership styles. Although the evidence indicates that women and men are equally capable of being good leaders, their leadership styles do tend to differ. Women are more likely to be democratic leaders, while men are more likely to be authoritarian leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Because of this difference, women leaders sometimes have trouble securing respect from their subordinates and are criticized for being too soft. Yet if they respond with a more masculine, or authoritarian, style, they may be charged with acting too much like a man and be criticized in ways a man would not be.

Groups, Roles, and Conformity

We have seen in this and previous chapters that groups are essential for social life, in large part because they play an important part in the socialization process and provide emotional and other support for their members. As sociologists have emphasized since the origins of the discipline during the 19th century, the influence of groups on individuals is essential for social stability. This influence operates through many mechanisms, including the roles that group members are expected to play. Secondary groups such as business organizations are also fundamental to complex industrial societies such as our own.

Social stability results because groups induce their members to conform to the norms, values, and attitudes of the groups themselves and of the larger society to which they belong. As the chapter-opening news story about teenage vandalism reminds us, however, conformity to the group, or peer pressure, has a downside if it means that people might adopt group norms, attitudes, or values that are bad for some reason to hold and may even result in harm to others. Conformity is thus a double-edged sword. Unfortunately, bad conformity happens all too often, as several social-psychological experiments, to which we now turn, remind us.

Solomon Asch and Perceptions of Line Lengths

Several decades ago Solomon Asch (1958) conducted one of the first of these experiments. Consider the pair of cards in Figure 4.7. One of the lines (A, B, or C) on the right card is identical in length to the single line in the left card. Which is it? If your vision is up to par, you undoubtedly answered Line B. Asch showed several students pairs of cards similar to the pair in Figure 4.7to confirm that it was very clear which of the three lines was the same length as the single line.

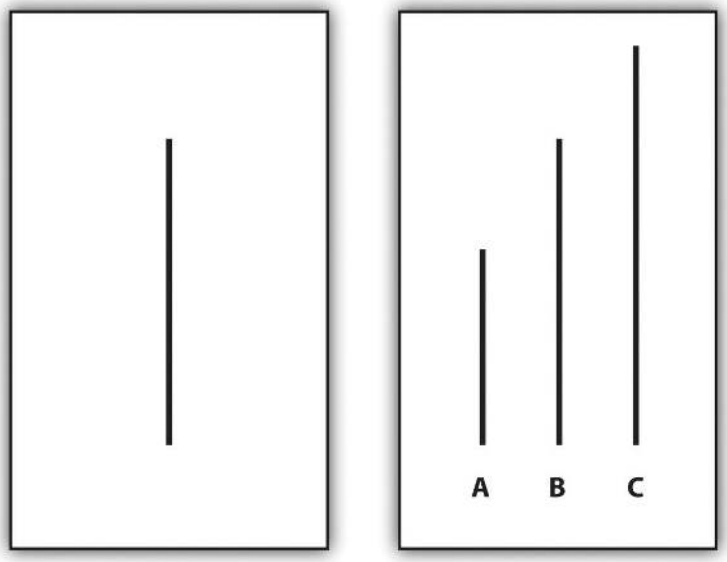


Figure 4.7 Examples of Cards Used in Asch's Experiment

Next, he had students meet in groups of at least six members and told them he was testing their visual ability. One by one he asked each member of the group to identify which of the three lines was the same length as the single line. One by one each student gave a wrong answer. Finally, the last student had to answer, and about one-third of the time the final student in each group also gave the wrong answer that everyone else was giving.

Unknown to these final students, all the other students were confederates or accomplices, to use some experimental jargon, as Asch had told them to give a wrong answer on purpose. The final student in each group was thus a naive subject, and Asch's purpose was to see how often the naive subjects in all the groups would give the wrong answer that everyone else was giving, even though it was *very* clear it was a wrong answer.

After each group ended its deliberations, Asch asked the naive subjects who gave the wrong answers why they did so. Some replied that they knew the answer was wrong but they did not want to look different from the other people in the group, even though they were strangers before the experiment began. But other naive subjects said *they had begun to doubt their own visual perception*: they decided that if everyone else was giving a different answer, then somehow they were seeing the cards incorrectly.

Asch's experiment indicated that groups induce conformity for at least two reasons. First, members feel pressured to conform so as not to alienate other members. Second, members may decide their own perceptions or views are wrong because they see other group members perceiving things differently and begin to doubt their own perceptive abilities. For either or both reasons, then, groups can, for better or worse, affect our judgments and our actions.

Stanley Milgram and Electric Shock

Although the type of influence Asch's experiment involved was benign, other experiments indicate that individuals can conform in a very harmful way. One such very famous experiment was conducted by Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram (1974) who designed it to address an important question that arose after World War II and the revelation of the murders of millions of people during the Nazi Holocaust. This question was, "How was the Holocaust possible?" Many people blamed the authoritarian nature of German culture and the so-called authoritarian personality that it inspired among German residents, who, it was thought, would be quite ready to obey rules and demands from authority figures.

Milgram wanted to see whether Germans would indeed be more likely than Americans to obey unjust authority. He devised a series of experiments and found that his American subjects were quite likely to give potentially lethal electric shocks to other people. During the experiment, a subject, or "teacher," would come into a laboratory and be told by a man wearing a white lab coat to sit down at a table housing a machine that sent electric shocks to a "learner." Depending on the type of experiment, this was either a person whom the teacher never saw and heard only over a loudspeaker, a person sitting in an adjoining room whom the teacher could see through a window and hear over the loudspeaker, or a person sitting right next to the teacher.

The teacher was then told to read the learner a list of word pairs, such as mother-father, cat-dog, and sun-moon. At the end of the list, the teacher was then asked to read the first word of the first word pair—for example, "mother" in our list—and to read several

possible matches. If the learner got the right answer (“father”), the teacher would move on to the next word pair, but if the learner gave the wrong answer, the teacher was to administer an electric shock to the learner. The initial shock was 15 volts, and each time a wrong answer was given, the shock would be increased, finally going up to 450 V, which was marked on the machine as “Danger: Severe Shock.” The learners often gave wrong answers and would cry out in pain as the voltage increased. In the 200-V range, they would scream, and in the 400-V range, they would say nothing at all. As far as the teachers knew, the learners had lapsed into unconsciousness from the electric shocks and even died.

Before his study began, Milgram consulted several psychologists, who assured him that no sane person would be willing to administer lethal shock in his experiments. He thus was shocked (pun intended) to find that more than half the teachers went all the way to 450 V in the experiments, where they could only hear the learner over a loudspeaker and not see him. Even in the experiments where the learner was sitting next to the teacher, some teachers still went to 450 V by forcing a hand of the screaming, resisting, but tied-down learner onto a metal plate that completed the electric circuit.

It turned out that the learners were not actually being shocked. Instead the voice and screams heard through the loudspeaker were from a tape recorder, and the learner that some of the teachers saw was placed there by Milgram to pretend to be in agony.

Milgram concluded that people are quite willing, however reluctantly, to obey authority even if it means inflicting great harm on others. If that could happen in his artificial experiment situation, he thought, then perhaps the Holocaust was not so incomprehensible after all, and it would be too simplistic to blame the Holocaust just on the authoritarianism of German culture. Instead, perhaps its roots lay in the very conformity to roles and group norms that makes society possible in the first place. The same processes that make society possible may also make tragedies like the Holocaust possible.

The Third Wave

In 1969, concern about the Holocaust prompted Ron Jones, a high school teacher from Palo Alto, California, to conduct a real-life experiment that reinforced Milgram’s findings by creating a Nazi-like environment in the school in just a few short days (Jones, 1979). He began by telling his sophomore history class about the importance of discipline and self-control. He had his students sit at attention and repeatedly stand up and sit down in quiet unison and saw their pride as they accomplished this task efficiently. All of a sudden everyone in the class seemed to be paying rapt attention to what was going on.

The next day, Jones began his class by talking about the importance of community and of being a member of a team or a cause. He had his class say over and over, “Strength through discipline, strength through community.” Then he showed them a new class salute, made by bringing the right hand near the right shoulder in a curled position. He called it the Third Wave salute, because a hand in this position resembled a wave about to topple over. Jones then told the students they had to salute each other outside the classroom, which they did so during the next few days. As word of what was happening in Jones’s class spread, students from other classes asked if they could come into his classroom.

On the third day of the experiment, Jones gave membership cards to every student in his class, which had now gained several new members. He told them they had to turn in the name of any student who was disobeying the class’s rules. He then talked to them about the importance of action and hard work, both of which enhanced discipline and community. Jones told his students to recruit new members and to prevent any student who was not a Third Wave member from entering the classroom. During the rest of the day, students came to him with reports of other students not saluting the right way or of some students criticizing the experiment. Meanwhile, more than 200 students had joined the Third Wave.



Figure 4.8 The Third Wave experiment was designed to have high school students in Palo Alto, California, understand how the Nazi Holocaust could have happened. The experiment illustrated that normal group processes that make social life possible can also lead people to conform to objectionable standards.© Thinkstock

On the fourth day of the experiment, more than 80 students squeezed into Jones's classroom. Jones informed them that the Third Wave was in fact a new political movement in the United States that would bring discipline, order, and pride to the country and that his students were among the first in the movement. The next day, Jones said, the Third Wave's national leader, whose identity was still not public, would be announcing a grand plan for action on national television at noon.

At noon the next day, more than 200 students crowded into the school auditorium to see the television speech. When Jones gave them the Third Wave salute, they saluted back. They chanted, "Strength through discipline, strength through community," over and over, and then sat in silent anticipation as Jones turned on a large television in front of the auditorium. The television remained blank. Suddenly Jones turned on a movie projector and showed scenes from a Nazi rally and the Nazi death camps. As the crowd in the auditorium reacted with shocked silence, the teacher told them there was no Third Wave movement and that almost overnight they had developed a Nazi-like society by allowing their regard for discipline, community, and action to warp their better judgment. Many students in the auditorium sobbed as they heard his words.

The Third Wave experiment once again indicates that the normal group processes that make social life possible also can lead people to conform to standards—in this case fascism—that most of us would reject. It also helps us understand further how the Holocaust could have happened. As Jones (1979, pp. 509–10) told his students in the auditorium, "You thought that you were the elect. That you were better than those outside this room. You bargained your freedom for the comfort of discipline and superiority. You chose to accept the group's will and the big lie over your own conviction.…Yes, we would all have made good Germans."

If you would like to know more about the experiment go to https://verdemagazine.com/the-third-wave-at-50

Zimbardo's Prison Experiment

In 1971, Stanford University psychologist Philip Zimbardo (1972) conducted an experiment to see what accounts for the extreme behaviors often seen in prisons: does this behavior stem from abnormal personalities of guards and prisoners or, instead, from the social structure of prisons, including the roles their members are expected to play? His experiment remains a compelling illustration of how roles and group processes can prompt extreme behavior.

Zimbardo advertised for male students to take part in a prison experiment and screened them out for histories of mental illness, violent behavior, and drug use. He then assigned them randomly to be either guards or prisoners in the experiment to ensure that any behavioral differences later seen between the two groups would have to stem from their different roles and not from any preexisting personality differences had they been allowed to volunteer.

The guards were told that they needed to keep order. They carried no weapons but did dress in khaki uniforms and wore reflector sunglasses to make eye contact impossible. On the first day of the experiment, the guards had the prisoners, who wore gowns and stocking caps to remove their individuality, stand in front of their cells (converted laboratory rooms) for the traditional prison

"count." They made the prisoners stand for hours on end and verbally abused those who complained. A day later the prisoners refused to come out for the count, prompting the guards to respond by forcibly removing them from their cells and sometimes spraying them with an ice-cold fire extinguisher to expedite the process. Some prisoners were put into solitary confinement. The guards also intensified their verbal abuse of the prisoners.

By the third day of the experiment, the prisoners had become very passive. The guards, several of whom indicated before the experiment that they would have trouble taking their role seriously, now were quite serious. They continued their verbal abuse of the prisoners and became quite hostile if their orders were not followed exactly. What had begun as somewhat of a lark for both guards and prisoners had now become, as far as they were concerned, a real prison.

Shortly thereafter, first one prisoner and then a few more came down with symptoms of a nervous breakdown. Zimbardo and his assistants could not believe this was possible, as they had planned for the experiment to last for 2 weeks, but they allowed the prisoners to quit the experiment. When the first one was being "released," the guards had the prisoners chant over and over that this prisoner was a bad prisoner and that they would be punished for his weakness. When this prisoner heard the chants, he refused to leave the area because he felt so humiliated. The researchers had to remind him that this was only an experiment and that he was not a real prisoner. Zimbardo had to shut down the experiment after only 6 days.

Zimbardo (1972) later observed that if psychologists had viewed the behaviors just described in a real prison, they would likely have attributed them to preexisting personality problems in both guards and prisoners. As already noted, however, his random assignment procedure invalidated this possibility. Zimbardo thus concluded that the guards' and prisoners' behavioral problems must have stemmed from the social structure of the prison experience and the roles each group was expected to play. Zimbardo (2008)Zimbardo, P. G. (2008). *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*. New York, NY: Random House Trade Paperbacks. later wrote that these same processes help us understand "how good people turn evil," to cite the subtitle of his book, and thus help explain the torture and abuse committed by American forces at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq after the United States invaded and occupied that country in 2003. Once again we see how two of the building blocks of social life—groups and roles—contain within them the seeds of regrettable behavior and attitudes.

Groupthink

As these examples suggest, sometimes people go along with the desires and views of a group against their better judgments, either because they do not want to appear different or because they have come to believe that the group's course of action may be the best one after all. Psychologist Irving Janis (1972) called this process groupthink and noted it has often affected national and foreign policy decisions in the United States and elsewhere. Group members often quickly agree on some course of action without thinking completely of alternatives. A well-known example here is the decision by President John F. Kennedy and his advisers in 1961 to take part in the invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba. Although several advisers thought the plan ill advised, they kept quiet, and the invasion was an embarrassing failure (Hart, Stern, & Sundelius, 1997). After most Americans decided that the decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was misguided, many commentators said that the decision resulted from "collective groupthink" and regretted that they themselves had succumbed to it (Weisberg, 2008).



Figure 4.9: Groupthink may prompt people to conform with the judgments or behavior of a group because they do not want to appear different. Because of pressures to reach a quick verdict, jurors may go along with the majority opinion even if they believe otherwise. Have you ever been in a situation where groupthink occurred? © Thinkstock

Groupthink is also seen in jury decision making. Because of the pressures to reach a verdict quickly, some jurors may go along with a verdict even if they believe otherwise. In juries and other small groups, groupthink is less likely to occur if at least one person expresses a dissenting view. Once that happens, other dissenters feel more comfortable voicing their own objections (Gastil, 2009).

Conclusion

- Leadership in groups and organizations involves instrumental and expressive leaders and several styles of leadership.
- Several social-psychological experiments illustrate how groups can influence the attitudes, behavior, and perceptions of their members. The Milgram and Zimbardo experiments showed that group processes can produce injurious behavior.

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For Your Review

1. Think of any two groups to which you now belong or to which you previously belonged. Now think of the leader(s) of each group. Were these leaders more instrumental or more expressive? Provide evidence to support your answer.
2. Have you ever been in a group where you or another member was pressured to behave in a way that you considered improper? Explain what finally happened.

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5.6: Formal Organizations

A complaint of modern life is that society is dominated by large and impersonal secondary organizations. From schools to businesses to healthcare to government, these organizations, referred to as formal organizations, are highly bureaucratized. Indeed, all formal organizations are, or likely will become, bureaucracies. A bureaucracy is an ideal type of formal organization. Ideal does not mean "best" in its sociological usage; it refers to a general model that describes a collection of characteristics, or a type that could describe most examples of the item under discussion. For example, if your professor were to tell the class to picture a car in their minds, most students will picture a car that shares a set of characteristics: four wheels, a windshield, and so on. Everyone's car will be somewhat different, however. Some might picture a two-door sports car while others picture an SUV. The general idea of the car that everyone shares is the ideal type. We will discuss bureaucracies as an ideal type of organization.

Types of Formal Organizations

Sociologist Amitai Etzioni (1975) posited that formal organizations fall into three categories. **Normative organizations**, also called voluntary organizations, are based on shared interests. As the name suggests, joining them is voluntary and typically done because people find membership rewarding in an intangible way. The Audubon Society and a ski club are examples of normative organizations. **Coercive organizations** are groups that we must be coerced, or pushed, to join. These may include prison or a rehabilitation center. Symbolic interactionist Erving Goffman states that most coercive organizations are *total institutions* (1961). A total institution is one in which inmates or military soldiers live a controlled lifestyle and in which total resocialization takes place. The third type is **utilitarian organizations**, which, as the name suggests, are joined because of the need for a specific material reward. High school and the workplace fall into this category—one joined in pursuit of a diploma, the other in order to make money.



Girl Scout troops and correctional facilities are both formal organizations. (Photo (a) courtesy of moonlightbulb/flickr; Photo (b) courtesy of CxOxS/flickr)

Table of Formal Organizations. This table shows Etzioni's three types of formal organizations. (Table courtesy of Etzioni 1975)

	Normative or Voluntary	Coercive	Utilitarian
Benefit of Membership	Intangible benefit	Corrective benefit	Tangible benefit
Type of Membership	Volunteer basis	Required	Contractual basis
Feeling of Connectedness	Shared affinity	No affinity	Some affinity

Bureaucracies

Bureaucracies are an ideal type of formal organization. Pioneer sociologist Max Weber popularly characterized a bureaucracy as having a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules, and impersonality (1922). People often complain about bureaucracies—declaring them slow, rule-bound, difficult to navigate, and unfriendly. Let's take a look at terms that define a bureaucracy to understand what they mean.

Hierarchy of authority refers to the aspect of bureaucracy that places one individual or office in charge of another, who in turn must answer to her own superiors. For example, as an employee at Walmart, your shift manager assigns you tasks. Your shift manager answers to his store manager, who must answer to her regional manager, and so on in a chain of command, up to the CEO who

must answer to the board members, who in turn answer to the stockholders. Everyone in this bureaucracy follows the chain of command.

A clear division of labor refers to the fact that within a bureaucracy, each individual has a specialized task to perform. For example, psychology professors teach psychology, but they do not attempt to provide students with financial aid forms. In this case, it is a clear and commonsense division. But what about in a restaurant where food is backed up in the kitchen and a hostess is standing nearby texting on her phone? Her job is to seat customers, not to deliver food. Is this a smart division of labor?

The existence of explicit rules refers to the way in which rules are outlined, written down, and standardized. For example, at your college or university, the student guidelines are contained within the Student Handbook. As technology changes and campuses encounter new concerns like cyberbullying, identity theft, and other hot-button issues, organizations are scrambling to ensure their explicit rules cover these emerging topics.

Finally, bureaucracies are also characterized by impersonality, which takes personal feelings out of professional situations. This characteristic grew, to some extent, out of a desire to protect organizations from nepotism, backroom deals, and other types of favoritism, simultaneously protecting customers and others served by the organization. Impersonality is an attempt by large formal organizations to protect their members. Large business organizations like Walmart often situate themselves as bureaucracies. This allows them to effectively and efficiently serve volumes of customers quickly and with affordable products. This results in an impersonal organization. Customers frequently complain that stores like Walmart care little about individuals, other businesses, and the community at large.

Bureaucracies are, in theory at least, meritocracies, meaning that hiring and promotion is based on proven and documented skills, rather than on nepotism or random choice. In order to get into a prestigious college, you need to perform well on the SAT and have an impressive transcript. In order to become a lawyer and represent clients, you must graduate law school and pass the state bar exam. Of course, there are many well-documented examples of success by those who did not proceed through traditional meritocracies. Think about technology companies with founders who dropped out of college, or performers who became famous after a YouTube video went viral. How well do you think established meritocracies identify talent? Wealthy families hire tutors, interview coaches, test-prep services, and consultants to help their kids get into the best schools. This starts as early as kindergarten in New York City, where competition for the most highly-regarded schools is especially fierce. Are these schools, many of which have copious scholarship funds that are intended to make the school more democratic, really offering all applicants a fair shake?

There are several positive aspects of bureaucracies. They are intended to improve efficiency, ensure equal opportunities, and ensure that most people can be served. And there are times when rigid hierarchies are needed. But remember that many of our bureaucracies grew large at the same time that our school model was developed—during the Industrial Revolution. Young workers were trained, and organizations were built for mass production, assembly line work, and factory jobs. In these scenarios, a clear chain of command was critical. Now, in the information age, this kind of rigid training and adherence to protocol can actually decrease both productivity and efficiency.

Today's workplace requires a faster pace, more problem solving, and a flexible approach to work. Too much adherence to explicit rules and a division of labor can leave an organization behind. And unfortunately, once established, bureaucracies can take on a life of their own. Maybe you have heard the expression "trying to turn a tanker around mid-ocean," which refers to the difficulties of changing direction with something large and set in its ways. State governments and current budget crises are examples of this challenge. It is almost impossible to make quick changes, leading states to continue, year after year, with increasingly unbalanced budgets. Finally, bureaucracies, as mentioned, grew as institutions at a time when privileged white males held all the power. While ostensibly based on meritocracy, bureaucracies can perpetuate the existing balance of power by only recognizing the merit in traditionally male and privileged paths.

Exercise 5.6.1: Iron Rule of Oligarchy

Michels (1911) suggested that all large organizations are characterized by the Iron Rule of Oligarchy**,** wherein an entire organization is ruled by a few elites. Do you think this is true? Can a large organization be collaborative?

The McDonaldization of Society

The McDonaldization of Society (Ritzer 1993) refers to the increasing presence of the fast food business model in common social institutions. This business model includes efficiency (the division of labor), predictability, calculability, and control (monitoring). For example, in your average chain grocery store, people at the register check out customers while stockers keep the shelves full of

goods and deli workers slice meats and cheese to order (efficiency). Whenever you enter a store within that grocery chain, you receive the same type of goods, see the same store organization, and find the same brands at the same prices (predictability). You will find that goods are sold by the pound, so that you can weigh your fruit and vegetable purchase rather than simply guessing at the price for that bag of onions, while the employees use a timecard to calculate their hours and receive overtime pay (calculability). Finally, you will notice that all store employees are wearing a uniform (and usually a name tag) so that they can be easily identified. There are security cameras to monitor the store, and some parts of the store, such as the stockroom, are generally considered off-limits to customers (control). While McDonaldization has resulted in improved profits and an increased availability of various goods and services to more people worldwide, it has also reduced the variety of goods available in the marketplace while rendering available products uniform, generic, and bland. Think of the difference between a mass-produced shoe and one made by a local cobbler, between a chicken from a family-owned farm and a corporate grower, or between a cup of coffee from the local diner and one from Starbucks.

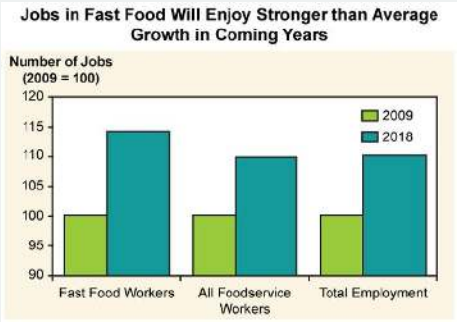


This McDonald's storefront in Egypt shows the McDonaldization of society. (Photo courtesy of s_w_ellis/flickr)

SECRETS OF THE MCJOB

We often talk about bureaucracies disparagingly, and no organization takes more heat than fast food restaurants. Several books and movies, such as *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* by Eric Schossler, paint an ugly picture of what goes in, what goes on, and what comes out of fast food chains. From their environmental impact to their role in the U.S. obesity epidemic, fast food chains are connected to numerous societal ills. Furthermore, working at a fast food restaurant is often disparaged, and even referred to dismissively, as having a McJob rather than a real job.

But business school professor Jerry Newman went undercover and worked behind the counter at seven fast food restaurants to discover what really goes on there. His book, *My Secret Life on the McJob*, documents his experience. Unlike Schossler, Newman found that these restaurants offer much good alongside the bad. Specifically, he asserted that the employees were honest and hardworking, that management was often impressive, and that the jobs required a lot more skill and effort than most people imagined. In the book, Newman cites a pharmaceutical executive who says a fast-food service job on an applicant's résumé is a plus because it indicates the employee is reliable and can handle pressure.



Fast-food jobs are expected to grow more quickly than most industries. (Graph courtesy of U.S. BLS)

Businesses like Chipotle, Panera, and Costco attempt to combat many of the effects of McDonaldization. In fact, Costco is known for paying its employees an average of $20 per hour, or slightly more than $40,000.00 per year. Nearly 90% of their employees receive health insurance from Costco, a number that is unheard of in the retail sector. While Chipotle is not known for high wages of its employees, it is known for attempting to sell high-quality foods from responsibly sourced providers. This is a different approach from what Schossler describes among burger chains like McDonalds. So what do you think? Are these McJobs and the organizations that offer them still serving a role in the economy and people's careers? Or are they dead-end jobs that typify all that is negative about large bureaucracies? Have you ever worked in one? Would you?

Summary

Large organizations fall into three main categories: normative/voluntary, coercive, and utilitarian. We live in a time of contradiction: while the pace of change and technology are requiring people to be more nimble and less bureaucratic in their thinking, large bureaucracies like hospitals, schools, and governments are more hampered than ever by their organizational format. At the same time, the past few decades have seen the development of a trend to bureaucratize and conventionalize local institutions. Increasingly, Main Streets across the country resemble each other; instead of a Bob's Coffee Shop and Jane's Hair Salon there is a Dunkin Donuts and a Supercuts. This trend has been referred to as the McDonaldization of society.

Section Quiz

Which is *not* an example of a normative organization?

1. A book club
2. A church youth group
3. A People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) protest group
4. A study hall

Which of these is an example of a total institution?

1. Jail
2. High school
3. Political party
4. A gym

Why do people join utilitarian organizations?

1. Because they feel an affinity with others there
2. Because they receive a tangible benefit from joining
3. Because they have no choice
4. Because they feel pressured to do so

Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of bureaucracies?

1. Coercion to join
2. Hierarchy of authority
3. Explicit rules
4. Division of labor

What are some of the intended positive aspects of bureaucracies?

1. Increased productivity
2. Increased efficiency
3. Equal treatment for all
4. All of the above

What is an advantage of the McDonaldization of society?

1. There is more variety of goods.
2. There is less theft.
3. There is more worldwide availability of goods.
4. There is more opportunity for businesses.

What is a disadvantage of the McDonaldization of society?

1. There is less variety of goods.
2. There is an increased need for employees with postgraduate degrees.
3. There is less competition so prices are higher.
4. There are fewer jobs so unemployment increases.

Answers

(1:D, 2:A, 3:B, 4:A, 5:D, 6:C, 7:A)

Short Answer

What do you think about the recent spotlight on fast food restaurants? Do you think they contribute to society's ills? Do you believe they provide a needed service? Have you ever worked a job like this? What did you learn?

Do you consider today's large companies like General Motors, Amazon, or Facebook to be bureaucracies? Why, or why not? Which of the main characteristics of bureaucracies do you see in them? Which are absent?

Where do you prefer to shop, eat out, or grab a cup of coffee? Large chains like Walmart or smaller retailers? Starbucks or a local restaurant? What do you base your decisions on? Does this section change how you think about these choices? Why, or why not?

Further Research

As mentioned above, the concept of McDonaldization is a growing one. The following link discusses this phenomenon further:openstaxcollege.org/l/McDonaldization

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Glossary

bureaucracies
formal organizations characterized by a hierarchy of authority, a clear division of labor, explicit rules, and impersonality.

clear division of labor
the fact that each individual in a bureaucracy has a specialized task to perform

coercive organizations
organizations that people do not voluntarily join, such as prison or a mental hospital

explicit rules
the types of rules in a bureaucracy; rules that are outlined, recorded, and standardized

formal organizations
large, impersonal organizations

hierarchy of authority
a clear chain of command found in a bureaucracy

impersonality
the removal of personal feelings from a professional situation

Iron Rule of Oligarchy

the theory that an organization is ruled by a few elites rather than through collaboration

McDonaldization of Society

the increasing presence of the fast food business model in common social institutions

meritocracy

a bureaucracy where membership and advancement is based on merit—proven and documented skills

normative or voluntary organizations

organizations that people join to pursue shared interests or because they provide some intangible rewards

total institution

an organization in which participants live a controlled lifestyle and in which total resocialization occurs

utilitarian organizations

organizations that are joined to fill a specific material need

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5.7: Groups, Organizations, and Social Change

Learning Objectives

- Describe the two ways in which groups and organizations play an important role in social change.
- Discuss how whistle-blowing is relevant to a discussion of groups, organizations, and social change.

As we consider ways to try to improve our society, the role of groups and organizations becomes very important. This section briefly considers this importance.

Vehicles for Social Change

One individual can certainly make a difference, but it is much more common for any difference to be made by individuals acting together—that is, by a group. In this regard, it is very clear that groups of many types have been and will continue to be vehicles for social reform and social change of many kinds. Many of the rights and freedoms Americans enjoy today were the result of committed efforts by social reform groups and social movements of years past: the abolitionist movement, the woman suffrage movement and contemporary women's movement, the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the gay rights movement, and the environmental movement, to name just a few (see Chapter 14). Their experience reflects the wisdom of anthropologist Margaret Mead's famous quote that we should "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Figure 4.13



Groups have often served as vehicles for many types of social reform and social change. Many of the rights and freedoms Americans enjoy today are the result of efforts by social reform groups of years past.

Source: Photo courtesy of U.S. Library of Congress, memory.loc.gov/service/pnp/cp...0/3g05585v.jpg.

In today's world, there are innumerable social service and social advocacy groups that are attempting to bring about changes to benefit a particular constituency or the greater society, and you might well belong to one of these groups on your campus or in your home community. All such groups, past, present, and future, are vehicles for social reform and social change, or at least have the potential for becoming such vehicles.

Obstacles to Social Change

Groups can bring about social reform and social change, but they can also thwart efforts to achieve a just society. For every social change and social reform effort that so many groups and organizations undertake, other groups and organizations try to block such efforts. Groups may be the building blocks of social reform and social change, but they are also the building blocks for the status quo. If the study of sociology can be said to be the study of group life, as noted earlier, the study of social reform and social change can also be said to be the study of what groups and organizations do to try to bring about social reform or to maintain the status quo.

Changing Groups and Organizations From Within

Groups and organizations are typically set in their ways and do not often change their dynamics, goals, or other key aspects. This is especially true of the formal organizations we call bureaucracies, which, as we saw, are so committed and even "stuck" to certain procedures that they become inefficient and even alienating. Groupthink can also set in and stifle creativity and keep group and organizational members from raising concerns about certain practices and/or goals.

Whistle-blowing is now the common term for raising such concerns, especially when the concern involves illegal and/or potentially harmful behavior (Alford, 2007; Schwartz, 2009). It is not easy to be a whistle-blower, and several individuals who have "blown the whistle" have been harassed, fired, or sued for doing so. In response to such reprisals, various federal and state laws have been passed to protect whistle-blowers (http://whistleblowerlaws.com/index.php). Still, it takes a certain amount of courage and no small amount of perseverance to be a whistle-blower. It is almost certain that some readers of this book will one day find themselves in a position where they, too, might have to decide whether to become a whistle-blower when they perceive some violation of the law and/or harmful behavior to be occurring. If so, they will have great potential for changing a group or an organization from within while performing a social good for the larger society.

Conclusion

- Groups can be vehicles for social change and social reform, but they can also be vehicles for thwarting social change and social reform.
- Whistle-blowing aims at exposing illegal and/or harmful behavior of corporations and other groups and organizations.

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For Your Review

1. Have you ever disapproved of a policy, behavior, or goal of a group to which you belonged? If so what, if anything, did you do? Explain your answer.
2. Do you think an employee for a corporation has the responsibility to become a whistle-blower if the corporation is engaging in illegal and/or harmful behavior? Explain your answer.

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5.8: Social Categorization and Stereotyping

Learning Objectives

- Describe the fundamental process of social categorization and its influence on thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- Define *stereotypes* and describe the ways that stereotypes are measured.
- Review the ways that stereotypes influence our behavior.

Thinking about others in terms of their group memberships is known as social categorization—*the natural cognitive process by which we place individuals into social groups.* Social categorization occurs when we think of someone as a man (versus a woman), an old person (versus a young person), a Black person (versus an Asian or White person), and so on (Allport, 1954/1979). Just as we categorize objects into different types, so we categorize people according to their social group memberships. Once we do so, we begin to respond to those people more as members of a social group than as individuals.

Imagine for a moment that two college students, John and Sarah, are talking at a table in the student union at your college or university. At this point, we would probably not consider them to be acting as group members, but rather as two individuals. John is expressing his opinions, and Sarah is expressing hers. Imagine, however, that as the conversation continues, Sarah brings up an assignment that she is completing for her women's studies class. It turns out that John does not think there should be a women's studies program at the college, and he tells Sarah so. He argues that if there is a women's studies program, then there should be a men's studies program too. Furthermore, he argues that women are getting too many breaks in job hiring and that qualified men are the targets of discrimination. Sarah feels quite the contrary—arguing that women have been the targets of sexism for many, many years and even now do not have the same access to high-paying jobs that men do.

You can see that an interaction that began at individual level, as two individuals conversing, has now turned to the group level, in which John has begun to consider himself as a man, and Sarah has begun to consider herself as a woman. In short, Sarah is now arguing her points not so much for herself as she is as a representative of one of her ingroups—namely, women—and John is acting as a representative of one of his ingroups—namely, men. Sarah feels that her positions are correct, and she believes they are true not only for her but for women in general. And the same is true of John. You can see that these social categorizations may create some potential for misperception, and perhaps even hostility. And John and Sarah may even change their opinions about each other, forgetting that they really like each other as individuals, because they are now responding more as group members with opposing views.

Imagine now that while John and Sarah are still talking, some students from another college, each wearing the hats and jackets of that school, show up in the student union. The presence of these outsiders might change the direction of social categorization entirely, leading both John and Sarah to think of themselves as students at their own college. And this social categorization might lead them to become more aware of the positive characteristics of their college (the excellent basketball team, lovely campus, and intelligent students) in comparison with the characteristics of the other school. Now, rather than perceiving themselves as members of two different groups (men versus women), John and Sarah might suddenly perceive themselves as members of the same social category (students at their college).

Perhaps this example will help you see the flexibility of social categorization. We sometimes think of our relationships with others at the individual level and sometimes at the group level. And which groups we use in social categorization can change over time and in different situations. I think you would agree that you are more likely to categorize yourself as a member of your college or university when your basketball or football team has just won a really important game, or at your commencement day ceremony, than you would on a normal evening out with your family. In these cases, your membership as a university student is simply more salient and important than it is every day, and you are more likely to categorize yourself accordingly.

Spontaneous Social Categorization

Social categorization occurs spontaneously, without much thought on our part (Crisp & Hewstone, 2007). Shelley Taylor and her colleagues (Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, & Ruderman, 1978) showed their research participants a slide and tape presentation of three male and three female college students who had supposedly participated in a discussion group. During the presentation, each member of the discussion group made a suggestion about how to advertise a college play. The statements were controlled so that across all the research participants, the statements made by the men and the women were of equal length and quality. Furthermore, one half of the participants were told that when the presentation was over, they would be asked to remember which person had made which

suggestion, whereas the other half of the participants were told merely to observe the interaction without attending to anything in particular.

After they had viewed all the statements made by the individuals in the discussion group, the research participants were given a memory test (this was entirely unexpected for the participants who had not been given memory instructions). The participants were shown the list of all the statements that had been made, along with the pictures of each of the discussion group members, and were asked to indicate who had made each of the statements. The research participants were not very good at this task, and yet when they made mistakes, these errors were very systematic.

As you can see in Table 12.1, the mistakes were such that the statements that had actually been made by a man were more frequently wrongly attributed to another man in the group than to another woman, and the statements actually made by a woman were more frequently attributed to other women in the group than to a man. The participants evidently categorized the speakers by their gender, leading them to make more within-gender than across-gender confusions.

Interestingly, and suggesting that categorization is occurring all the time, the instructions that the participants had been given made absolutely no difference. There was just as much categorization for those who were not given any instructions as for those who were told to remember who said what. Other research using this technique has found that we spontaneously categorize each other on the basis of many other group memberships, including race, academic status (student versus teacher), social roles, and other social categories (Fiske, Haslam, & Fiske, 1991; Stangor, Lynch, Duan, & Glass, 1992).

Table 12.1 Name Confusions

Instructions	Within race errors	Between race errors
Memory	5.78	4.29
No memory	6.57	4.36

Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff, and Ruderman (1978) demonstrated that people categorized others spontaneously. Even without any instructions to categorize, people nevertheless confused others by their sex.

The conclusion is simple, if perhaps obvious: Social categorization is occurring all around us all the time. Indeed, social categorization occurs so quickly that people may have difficulty *not* thinking about others in terms of their group memberships (see Figure 12.4).



Figure 12.4: If you are like most people, you will have a strong desire to categorize this person as either male or female. drburtoni – Transgenders March, Portland 2015 SERIES – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

The Benefits of Social Categorization

The tendency to categorize others is normally quite useful. In some cases, we categorize because doing so provides us with information about the characteristics of people who belong to certain social groups (Lee, Jussim, & McCauley, 1995). If you found yourself lost in a city, you might look for a police officer or a taxi driver to help you find your way. In this case, social categorization would probably be useful because a police officer or a taxi driver might be particularly likely to know the layout of the city streets. Of course, using social categories will only be informative to the extent that the stereotypes held by the individual about that category are accurate. If police officers were actually not that knowledgeable about the city layout, then using this categorization would not be informative.

It has been argued that there is a kernel of truth in most stereotypes, and this seems to be the case. There is a correlation between how group members perceive the stereotypes of their own groups and how people from other groups perceive those same stereotypes (Judd & Park, 1993; Swim, 1994). This truth may come in part from the roles that individuals play in society. For instance, the stereotypes (which are held by many people) that women are “nurturing” and that men are “dominant” may occur in part because, on average, men and women find themselves in different social roles within a culture (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). In most cultures, men are more likely to be in higher-status occupations, such as doctors and lawyers, whereas women are more likely to play the role of homemakers and child-care workers. In this sense, the stereotypes are at least partly true for many of the members of the social category, in terms of their actual behaviors. Because men are more likely to be leaders than are women, they may well be, on average, more dominant; and because women are more likely to take care of children, they may, on average, act in a more nurturing way than do men.

On the other hand, we sometimes categorize others not because it seems to provide more information about them but because we may not have the time (or the motivation) to do anything more thorough. Using our stereotypes to size up another person might simply make our life easier (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994). According to this approach, thinking about other people in terms of their social category memberships is a functional way of dealing with the world—things are complicated, and we reduce complexity by relying on our stereotypes.

The Negative Outcomes of Social Categorization

Although thinking about others in terms of their social category memberships has some potential benefits for the person who does the categorizing, categorizing others, rather than treating them as unique individuals with their own unique characteristics, has a

wide variety of negative, and often very unfair, outcomes for those who are categorized.

One problem is that social categorization distorts our perceptions such that we tend to exaggerate the differences between people from different social groups while at the same time perceiving members of groups (and particularly outgroups) as more similar to each other than they actually are. This overgeneralization makes it more likely that we will think about and treat all members of a group the same way. Tajfel and Wilkes (1963) performed a simple experiment that provided a picture of the potential outcomes of categorization. As you can see in Figure 12.5, the experiment involved having research participants judge the length of six lines. In one of the experimental conditions, participants simply saw six lines, whereas in the other condition, the lines were systematically categorized into two groups—one comprising the three shorter lines and one comprising the three longer lines.

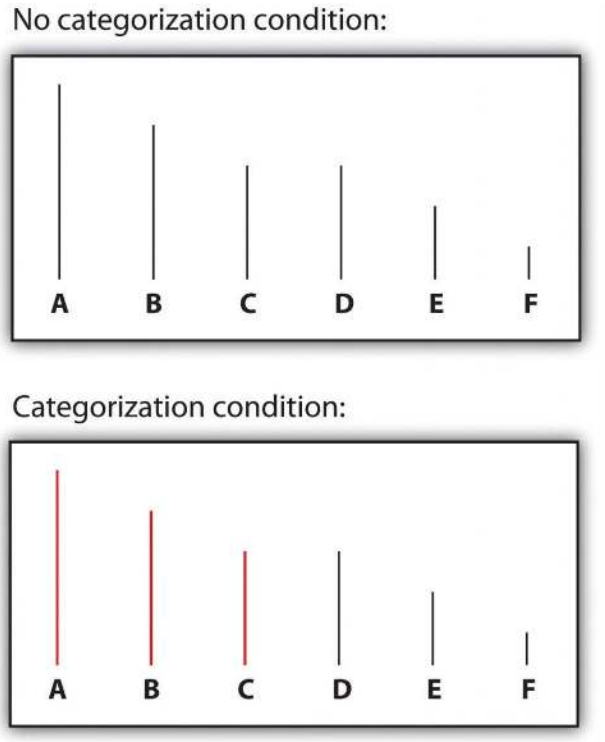


Figure 12.5: Perceptual Accentuation

Lines C and D were seen as the same length in the noncategorized condition, but line C was perceived as longer than line D when the lines were categorized into two groups. From Tajfel (1970).

Tajfel found that the lines were perceived differently when they were categorized, such that the differences between the groups and the similarities within the groups were emphasized. Specifically, he found that although lines C and D (which are actually the same length) were perceived as equal in length when the lines were not categorized, line D was perceived as being significantly longer than line C in the condition in which the lines were categorized. In this case, categorization into two groups—the "short lines group" and the "long lines group"—produced a perceptual bias such that the two groups of lines were seen as more different than they really were.

Similar effects occur when we categorize other people. We tend to see people who belong to the same social group as more similar than they actually are, and we tend to judge people from different social groups as more different than they actually are. The tendency to see members of social groups as similar to each other is particularly strong for members of outgroups, resulting in outgroup homogeneity—*the tendency to view members of outgroups as more similar to each other than we see members of ingroups* (Linville, Salovey, & Fischer, 1986; Ostrom & Sedikides, 1992; Meissner & Brigham, 2001). I'm sure you've had this experience yourself, when you found yourself thinking or saying, "Oh, them, they're all the same!"

Patricia Linville and Edward Jones (1980) gave research participants a list of trait terms and asked them to think about either members of their own group (e.g., Blacks) or members of another group (e.g., Whites) and to place the trait terms into piles that represented different types of people in the group. The results of these studies, as well as other studies like them, were clear: People perceive outgroups as more homogeneous than the ingroup. Just as White people used fewer piles of traits to describe Blacks than

Whites, young people used fewer piles of traits to describe elderly people than they did young people, and students used fewer piles for members of other universities than they did for members of their own university.

Outgroup homogeneity occurs in part because we don't have as much contact with outgroup members as we do with ingroup members, and the quality of interaction with outgroup members is often more superficial. This prevents us from really learning about the outgroup members as individuals, and as a result, we tend to be unaware of the differences among the group members. In addition to learning less about them because we see and interact with them less, we routinely categorize outgroup members, thus making them appear more cognitively similar (Haslam, Oakes, & Turner, 1996).

Once we begin to see the members of outgroups as more similar to each other than they actually are, it then becomes very easy to apply our stereotypes to the members of the groups without having to consider whether the characteristic is actually true of the particular individual. If men think that women are all alike, then they may also think that they all have the same characteristics—they're all "emotional" and "weak." And women may have similarly simplified beliefs about men (they're "insensitive," "unwilling to commit," etc.). The outcome is that the stereotypes become linked to the group itself in a set of mental representations (Figure 12.6). The stereotypes are "pictures in our heads" of the social groups (Lippman, 1922). These beliefs just seem right and natural, even though they are frequently distorted overgeneralizations (Hirschfeld, 1996; Yzerbyt, Schadron, Leyens, & Rocher, 1994).

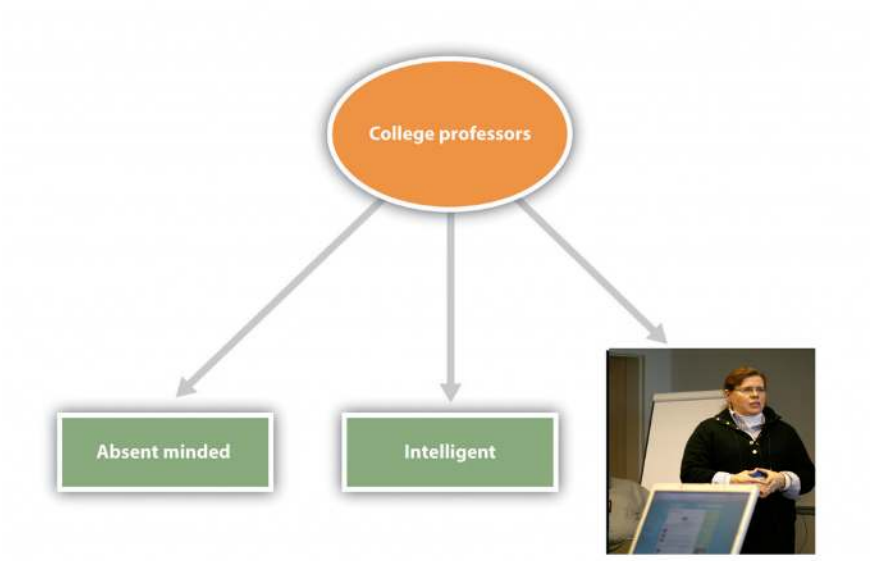


Figure 12.6: Stereotypes are the beliefs associated with social categories. The figure shows links between the social category of college professors and its stereotypes as a type of neural network or schema. The representation also includes one image (or exemplar) of a particular college professor whom the student knows. opacity – oral histories presenter – CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Our stereotypes and prejudices are learned through many different processes. This multiplicity of causes is unfortunate because it makes stereotypes and prejudices even more likely to form and harder to change. For one, we learn our stereotypes in part through our communications with parents and peers (Aboud & Doyle, 1996) and from the behaviors we see portrayed in the media (Brown, 1995). Even 5-year-old children have learned cultural norms about the appropriate activities and behaviors for boys and girls and also have developed stereotypes about age, race, and physical attractiveness (Bigler & Liben, 2006). And there is often good agreement about the stereotypes of social categories among the individuals within a given culture. In one study assessing stereotypes, Stephanie Madon and her colleagues (Madon et al., 2001) presented U.S. college students with a list of 84 trait terms and asked them to indicate for which groups each trait seemed appropriate (Figure 12.6). The participants tended to agree about what traits were true of which groups, and this was true even for groups of which the respondents were likely to never have met a single member (Arabs and Russians). Even today, there is good agreement about the stereotypes of members of many social groups, including men and women and a variety of ethnic groups.

Table 12.2: Current Stereotypes Held by College Students

Americans	**%**	**Blacks**	**%**	**Italians**	**%**
Materialistic	53.6	Musical	27.6	Loyal to family ties	62.7
Lazy	30.4	Pleasure loving	26	Tradition loving	47.5

Individualistic	28.6	Loud	20.7	Passionate	39
Pleasure loving	28	Aggressive	15.5	Religious	37.3
Industrious	23.2	Artistic	13.8	Quick tempered	35.6
Germans	**%**	**Jews**	**%**	**Chinese**	**%**
Intelligent	45.8	Very religious	52.5	Intelligent	60.3
Industrious	37.3	Intelligent	49.2	Loyal to family ties	41.4
Nationalistic	30.5	Tradition loving	32.2	Reserved	36.2
Scientifically minded	27.1	Shrewd	30.5	Industrious	32.8
Methodical	20.3	Loyal to family ties	28.8	Tradition loving	31

Once they become established, stereotypes (like any other cognitive representation) tend to persevere. We begin to respond to members of stereotyped categories as if we already knew what they were like. Yaacov Trope and Eric Thompson (1997) found that individuals addressed fewer questions to members of categories about which they had strong stereotypes (as if they already knew what these people were like) and that the questions they did ask were likely to confirm the stereotypes they already had.

In other cases, stereotypes are maintained because information that confirms our stereotypes is better remembered than information that disconfirms them. When we see members of social groups perform behaviors, we tend to better remember information that confirms our stereotypes than we remember information that disconfirms our stereotypes (Fyock & Stangor, 1994). If we believe that women are bad drivers and we see a woman driving poorly, then we tend to remember it, but when we see a woman who drives particularly well, we tend to forget it. This is of course another example of the general principle of assimilation—we tend to perceive the world in ways that make it fit our existing beliefs more easily than we change our beliefs to fit the reality around us.

And stereotypes become difficult to change because they are so important to us—they become an integral and important part of our everyday lives in our culture. Stereotypes are frequently expressed on TV, in movies, and in chat rooms and blogs, and we learn a lot of our beliefs from these sources. Our friends also tend to hold beliefs similar to ours, and we talk about these beliefs when we get together with them (Schaller & Conway, 1999). In short, stereotypes and prejudice are powerful largely because they are important social norms that are part of our culture (Guimond, 2000).

Because they are so highly cognitively accessible, and because they seem so “right,” our stereotypes easily influence our judgments of and responses to those we have categorized. The social psychologist John Bargh once described stereotypes as “cognitive monsters” because their activation was so powerful and because the activated beliefs had such insidious influences on social judgment (Bargh, 1999). Making things even more difficult, stereotypes are strongest for the people who are in most need of change—the people who are most prejudiced (Lepore & Brown, 1997).

Because stereotypes and prejudice often operate out of our awareness, and also because people are frequently unwilling to admit that they hold them, social psychologists have developed methods for assessing them indirectly. In the next section we will consider two of these approaches—the bogus pipeline procedure and the Implicit Association Test (IAT)

Research Focus

Measuring Stereotypes Indirectly

One difficulty in measuring stereotypes and prejudice is that people may not tell the truth about their beliefs. Most people do not want to admit—either to themselves or to others—that they hold stereotypes or that they are prejudiced toward some social groups. To get around this problem, social psychologists make use of a number of techniques that help them measure these beliefs more subtly and indirectly.

One indirect approach to assessing prejudice is called the *bogus pipeline procedure* (Jones & Sigall, 1971). In this procedure, the experimenter first convinces the participants that he or he has access to their “true” beliefs, for instance, by getting access to a questionnaire that they completed at a prior experimental session. Once the participants are convinced that the researcher is able to assess their “true” attitudes, it is expected that they will be more honest in answering the rest of the questions they are

asked because they want to be sure that the researcher does not catch them lying. The bogus pipeline procedure suggests that people may frequently mask their negative beliefs in public—people express more prejudice when they are in the bogus pipeline than they do when they are asked the same questions more directly.

Other indirect measures of prejudice are also frequently used in social psychological research, for instance—assessing nonverbal behaviors such as speech errors or physical closeness. One common measure involves asking participants to take a seat on a chair near a person from a different racial or ethnic group and measuring how far away the person sits (Sechrist & Stangor, 2001; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). People who sit farther away are assumed to be more prejudiced toward the members of the group.

Because our stereotypes are activated spontaneously when we think about members of different social groups, it is possible to use reaction-time measures to assess this activation and thus to learn about people's stereotypes and prejudices. In these procedures, participants are asked to make a series of judgments about pictures or descriptions of social groups and then to answer questions as quickly as they can, but without making mistakes. The speed of these responses is used to determine an individual's stereotypes or prejudice.

The most popular reaction-time implicit measure of prejudice—the *Implicit Association Test (IAT)*—is frequently used to assess stereotypes and prejudice (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007). In the IAT, participants are asked to classify stimuli that they view on a computer screen into one of two categories by pressing one of two computer keys, one with their left hand and one with their right hand. Furthermore, the categories are arranged such that the responses to be answered with the left and right buttons either "fit with" (match) the stereotype or do not "fit with" (mismatch) the stereotype. For instance, in one version of the IAT, participants are shown pictures of men and women and also shown words related to gender stereotypes (e.g., *strong*, *leader*, or *powerful* for men and *nurturing*, *emotional*, or *weak* for women). Then the participants categorize the photos ("Is this picture a picture of a man or a woman?") and answer questions about the stereotypes ("Is this the word *strong*?) by pressing either the Yes button or the No button using either their left hand or their right hand.

When the responses are arranged on the screen in a "matching" way, such that the male category and the "strong" category are on the same side of the screen (e.g., on the right side), participants can do the task very quickly and they make few mistakes. It's just easier, because the stereotypes are matched or associated with the pictures in a way that makes sense. But when the images are arranged such that the women and the strong categories are on the same side, whereas the men and the weak categories are on the other side, most participants make more errors and respond more slowly. The basic assumption is that if two concepts are associated or linked, they will be responded to more quickly if they are classified using the same, rather than different, keys.

Implicit association procedures such as the IAT show that even participants who claim that they are not prejudiced do seem to hold cultural stereotypes about social groups. Even Black people themselves respond more quickly to positive words that are associated with White rather than Black faces on the IAT, suggesting that they have subtle racial prejudice toward Blacks.

Because they hold these beliefs, it is possible—although not guaranteed—that they may use them when responding to other people, creating a subtle and unconscious type of discrimination. Although the meaning of the IAT has been debated (Tetlock & Mitchell, 2008), research using implicit measures does suggest that—whether we know it or not, and even though we may try to control them when we can—our stereotypes and prejudices are easily activated when we see members of different social categories (Barden, Maddux, Petty, & Brewer, 2004).

Do you hold implicit prejudices? Try the IAT yourself, here: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit

Although in some cases the stereotypes that are used to make judgments might actually be true of the individual being judged, in many other cases they are not. Stereotyping is problematic when the stereotypes we hold about a social group are inaccurate overall, and particularly when they do not apply to the individual who is being judged (Stangor, 1995). Stereotyping others is simply unfair. Even if many women are more emotional than are most men, not all are, and it is not right to judge any one woman as if she is.

In the end, stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies, such that our expectations about the group members make the stereotypes come true (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977; Word, Zanna, & Cooper, 1974). Once we believe that men make better leaders than women, we tend to behave toward men in ways that makes it easier for them to lead. And we behave toward women in ways that makes it more difficult for them to lead. The result? Men find it easier to excel in leadership positions, whereas women have to work hard to overcome the false beliefs about their lack of leadership abilities (Phelan & Rudman, 2010). And self-fulfilling

prophecies are ubiquitous—even teachers' expectations about their students' academic abilities can influence the students' school performance (Jussim, Robustelli, & Cain, 2009).

Of course, you may think that you personally do not behave in these ways, and you may not. But research has found that stereotypes are often used out of our awareness, which makes it very difficult for us to correct for them. Even when we think we are being completely fair, we may nevertheless be using our stereotypes to condone discrimination (Chen & Bargh, 1999). And when we are distracted or under time pressure, these tendencies become even more powerful (Stangor & Duan, 1991).

Furthermore, attempting to prevent our stereotype from coloring our reactions to others takes effort. We experience more negative affect (particularly anxiety) when we are with members of other groups than we do when we are with people from our own groups, and we need to use more cognitive resources to control our behavior because of our anxiety about revealing our stereotypes or prejudices (Butz & Plant, 2006; Richeson & Shelton, 2003). When we know that we need to control our expectations so that we do not unintentionally stereotype the other person, we may try to do so—but doing so takes effort and may frequently fail (Macrae, Bodenhausen, Milne, & Jetten, 1994).

Social Psychology in the Public Interest

Stereotype Threat

Our stereotypes influence not only our judgments of others but also our beliefs about ourselves, and even our own performance on important tasks. In some cases, these beliefs may be positive, and they have the effect of making us feel more confident and thus better able to perform tasks. Because Asian students are aware of the stereotype that "Asians are good at math," reminding them of this fact before they take a difficult math test can improve their performance on the test (Walton & Cohen, 2003). On the other hand, sometimes these beliefs are negative, and they create negative self-fulfilling prophecies such that we perform more poorly just because of our knowledge about the stereotypes.

One of the long-standing puzzles in the area of academic performance concerns why Black students perform more poorly on standardized tests, receive lower grades, and are less likely to remain in school in comparison with White students, even when other factors such as family income, parents' education, and other relevant variables are controlled. Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson (1995) tested the hypothesis that these differences might be due to the activation of negative stereotypes. Because Black students are aware of the (inaccurate) stereotype that "Blacks are intellectually inferior to Whites," this stereotype might create a negative expectation, which might interfere with their performance on intellectual tests through fear of confirming that stereotype.

In support of this hypothesis, Steele and Aronson's research revealed that Black college students performed worse (in comparison with their prior test scores) on math questions taken from the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) when the test was described to them as being "diagnostic of their mathematical ability" (and thus when the stereotype was relevant) but that their performance was not influenced when the same questions were framed as "an exercise in problem solving." And in another study, Steele and Aronson found that when Black students were asked to indicate their race before they took a math test (again activating the stereotype), they performed more poorly than they had on prior exams, whereas the scores of White students were not affected by first indicating their race.

Steele and Aronson argued that thinking about negative stereotypes that are relevant to a task that one is performing creates stereotype threat—*performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes*. That is, they argued that the negative impact of race on standardized tests may be caused, at least in part, by the performance situation itself. Because the threat is "in the air," Black students may be negatively influenced by it.

Research has found that the experience of stereotype threat can help explain a wide variety of performance decrements among those who are targeted by negative stereotypes. For instance, when a math task is described as diagnostic of intelligence, Latinos and particularly Latinas perform more poorly than do Whites (Gonzales, Blanton, & Williams, 2002). Similarly, when stereotypes are activated, children with low socioeconomic status perform more poorly in math than do those with high socioeconomic status, and psychology students perform more poorly than do natural science students (Brown, Croizet, Bohner, Fournet, & Payne, 2003). Even groups who typically enjoy advantaged social status can be made to experience stereotype threat. White men performed more poorly on a math test when they were told that their performance would be compared with that of Asian men (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, & Steele, 1999), and Whites performed more poorly than Blacks on a sport-related task when it was described to them as measuring their natural athletic ability (Stone, 2002).

Stereotype threat is created in situations that pose a significant threat to self-concern, such that our perceptions of ourselves as important, valuable, and capable individuals are threatened. In these situations, there is a discrepancy between our positive concept of our skills and abilities and the negative stereotypes suggesting poor performance. When our stereotypes lead us to be believe that we are likely to perform poorly on a task, we experience a feeling of unease and status threat.

Research has found that stereotype threat is caused by both cognitive and affective factors. On the cognitive side, individuals who are experiencing stereotype threat show an impairment in cognitive processing that is caused by increased vigilance toward the environment and attempts to suppress their stereotypical thoughts. On the affective side, stereotype threat creates stress as well as a variety of affective responses including anxiety (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008).

Stereotype threat is not, however, absolute—we can get past it if we try. What is important is to reduce the self-concern that is engaged when we consider the relevant negative stereotypes. Manipulations that affirm positive characteristics about oneself or one's group are successful at reducing stereotype threat (Alter, Aronson, Darley, Rodriguez, & Ruble, 2010; Greenberg et al., 2003; McIntyre, Paulson, & Lord, 2003). In fact, just knowing that stereotype threat exists and may influence performance can help alleviate its negative impact (Johns, Schmader, & Martens, 2005)

Key Takeaways

- Beliefs about the characteristics of the groups and the members of those groups are known as stereotypes.
- Prejudice refers to an unjustifiable negative attitude toward an outgroup.
- Stereotypes and prejudice may create discrimination.
- Stereotyping and prejudice begin from social categorization—the natural cognitive process by which we place individuals into social groups.
- Social categorization influences our perceptions of groups—for instance, the perception of outgroup homogeneity.
- Once our stereotypes and prejudices become established, they are difficult to change and may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies, such that our expectations about the group members make the stereotypes come true.
- Stereotypes may influence our performance on important tasks through stereotype threat.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Look again at the pictures in Figure 12.2, and consider your thoughts and feelings about each person. What are your stereotypes and prejudices about them? Do you think your stereotypes are accurate?
2. On which (if any) social categories do you categorize others? Why do you (or don't you) categorize? Is your behavior fair or unfair to the people you are categorizing?
3. Think of a task that one of the social groups to which you belong is considered to be particularly good (or poor) at. Do you think the cultural stereotypes about your group have ever influenced your performance on a task?

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5.9: Ingroup Favoritism and Prejudice

Learning Objectives

- Review the causes and outcomes of ingroup favoritism.
- Summarize the results of Henri Tajfel's research on minimal groups.
- Outline the personality and cultural variables that influence ingroup favoritism.

We have now seen that social categorization occurs whenever we think about others in terms of their category memberships rather than on the basis of other, more personal information about the individual. And we have seen that social categorization can have a variety of negative consequences for the people who are the targets of our stereotypes. But social categorization becomes even more important, and has even more powerful effects upon our reactions to others, when the categorization becomes more emotionally involving, and particularly when the categorization involves categorization into liked ingroups and potentially disliked outgroups (Amodio & Devine, 2006).

Because our ancestors lived in small social groups that were frequently in conflict with other groups, it was evolutionarily functional for them to view members of other groups as different and potentially dangerous (Brewer & Caporael, 2006; Navarrete, Kurzban, Fessler, & Kirkpatrick, 2004). Differentiating between "us" and "them" probably helped keep us safe and free from disease, and as a result, the human brain became very efficient in making these distinctions (Mahajan et al., 2011; Phelps et al., 2000; Van Vugt & Schaller, 2008; Zaraté, Stoever, MacLin, & Arms-Chavez, 2008). The problem is that these naturally occurring tendencies may lead us to prefer people who are like us, and in some cases even to unfairly reject people from outgroups.

Liking "Us" More Than "Them": Ingroup Favoritism

In his important research on group perceptions, Henri Tajfel and his colleagues (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) demonstrated how incredibly powerful the role of self-concern is in group perceptions. He found that just dividing people into arbitrary groups produces ingroup favoritism—*the tendency to respond more positively to people from our ingroups than we do to people from outgroups*.

In Tajfel's research, small groups of high school students came to his laboratory for a study supposedly concerning "artistic tastes." The students were first shown a series of paintings by two contemporary artists, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky. Supposedly on the basis of their preferences for each painting, the students were divided into two groups (they were called the X group and the Y group). Each boy was told which group he had been assigned to and that different boys were assigned to different groups. But none of them were told the group memberships of any of the other boys.

The boys were then given a chance to allocate points to other boys in their own group and to boys in the other group (but never to themselves) using a series of payoff matrices, such as those shown in Figure 12.7. The charts divided a given number of rewards between two boys, and the boys thought that the rewards would be used to determine how much each boy would be paid for his participation. In some cases, the division was between two boys in the boy's own group (the ingroup); in other cases, the division was between two boys who had been assigned to the other group (the outgroup); and in still other cases, the division was between a boy in the ingroup and a boy in the outgroup. Tajfel then examined the goals that the boys used when they divided up the points.

Ingroup	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
Outgroup	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	31	23	25
Ingroup	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
Outgroup	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29
Ingroup	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Outgroup	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25
Ingroup	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Outgroup	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29

Figure 12.7 Examples of Matrices Used in the Minimal Intergroup Studies of Tajfel and His Colleagues From Tajfel (1970).

A comparison of the boys' choices in the different matrices showed that they allocated points between two boys in the ingroup or between two boys in the outgroup in an essentially fair way, so that each boy got the same amount. However, fairness was not the predominant approach when dividing points between ingroup and outgroup. In this case, rather than exhibiting fairness, the boys displayed ingroup favoritism, such that they gave more points to other members of their own group in relationship to boys in the other group. For instance, the boys might assign 8 points to the ingroup boy and only 3 points to the outgroup boy, even though the matrix also contained a choice in which they could give the ingroup and the outgroup boys 13 points each. In short, the boys preferred to maximize the gains of the other boys in their own group in comparison with the boys in the outgroup, even if doing so meant giving their own group members fewer points than they could otherwise have received.

Perhaps the most striking part of Tajfel's results is that ingroup favoritism was found to occur on the basis of such arbitrary and unimportant groupings. In fact, ingroup favoritism occurs even when the assignment to groups is on such trivial things as whether people "overestimate" or "underestimate" the number of dots shown on a display, or on the basis of a completely random coin toss (Billig & Tajfel, 1973; Locksley, Ortiz, & Hepburn, 1980). Tajfel's research, as well other research demonstrating ingroup favoritism, provides a powerful demonstration of a very important social psychological process: Groups exist simply because individuals perceive those groups as existing. Even in a case where there really is no group (at least no meaningful group in any real sense), we still perceive groups and still demonstrate ingroup favoritism.

The Outcomes of Ingroup Favoritism

The tendency to favor their ingroup develops quickly in young children, beginning at the age of 3 years and increasing up to about 6 years of age, and almost immediately begins to influence their behavior (Aboud, 2003; Aboud & Amato, 2001). Young children show greater liking for peers of their own sex and race and typically play with same-sex others after the age of 3. And there is a norm that we should favor our ingroups: People like people who express ingroup favoritism better than those who are more egalitarian (Castelli & Carraro, 2010). Ingroup favoritism is found for many different types of social groups, in many different settings, on many different dimensions, and in many different cultures (Bennett et al., 2004; Pinter & Greenwald, 2011). Ingroup favoritism also occurs on trait ratings, such that ingroup members are rated as having more positive characteristics than are outgroup members (Hewstone, 1990). People also take credit for the successes of other ingroup members, remember more positive than negative information about ingroups, are more critical of the performance of outgroup than of ingroup members, and believe that their own groups are less prejudiced than are outgroups (Shelton & Richeson, 2005).

People also talk differently about their ingroups than their outgroups, such that they describe the ingroup and its members as having broad positive traits ("We are *generous* and *friendly*") but describe negative ingroup behaviors in terms of the specific behaviors of single group members ("Our group member, Bill, hit someone") (Maass & Arcuri, 1996; Maass, Ceccarielli, & Rudin, 1996; von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & Vargas, 1997). These actions allow us to spread positive characteristics to all members of our ingroup but reserve negative aspects for individual group members, thereby protecting the group's image.

People *also make trait attributions in ways that benefit their ingroups, just as they make trait attributions that benefit themselves*. This general tendency, known as the ultimate attribution error, results in the tendency for each of the competing groups to perceive

the other group extremely and unrealistically negatively (Hewstone, 1990). When an ingroup member engages in a positive behavior, we tend to see it as a stable internal characteristic of the group as a whole. Similarly, negative behaviors on the part of the outgroup are seen as caused by stable negative group characteristics. On the other hand, negative behaviors from the ingroup and positive behaviors from the outgroup are more likely to be seen as caused by temporary situational variables or by behaviors of specific individuals and are less likely to be attributed to the group.

Ingroup Favoritism Has Many Causes

Ingroup favoritism has a number of causes. For one, it is a natural part of social categorization—we categorize into ingroups and outgroups because it helps us simplify and structure our environment. It is easy, and perhaps even natural, to believe in the simple idea that "we are better than they are." People who report that they have strong needs for simplifying their environments also show more ingroup favoritism (Stangor & Leary, 2006).

Ingroup favoritism also occurs at least in part because we belong to the ingroup and not the outgroup (Cadinu & Rothbart, 1996). We like people who are similar to ourselves, and we perceive other ingroup members as similar to us. This also leads us to favor other members of our ingroup, particularly when we can clearly differentiate them from members of outgroups. We may also prefer ingroups because they are more familiar to us (Zebrowitz, Bronstad, & Lee, 2007).

But the most important determinant of ingroup favoritism is simple self-enhancement. We want to feel good about ourselves, and seeing our ingroups positively helps us do so (Brewer, 1979). Being a member of a group that has positive characteristics provides us with the feelings of social identity—*the positive self-esteem that we get from our group memberships*. When we can identify ourselves as a member of a meaningful social group (even if it is a relatively trivial one), we can feel better about ourselves.

We are particularly likely to show ingroup favoritism when we are threatened or otherwise worried about our self-concept (Maner et al., 2005; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2000). And people express higher self-esteem after they have been given the opportunity to derogate outgroups, suggesting that ingroup favoritism does make us feel good (Lemyre & Smith, 1985; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). Furthermore, when individuals feel that the value of their ingroup is being threatened, they respond as if they are trying to regain their own self-worth—by expressing more positive attitudes toward ingroups and more negative attitudes toward outgroups (Branscombe, Wann, Noel, & Coleman, 1993; Spears, Doosje, & Ellemers, 1997). Fein and Spencer (1997) found that participants expressed less prejudice after they had been given the opportunity to affirm and make salient an important and positive part of their own self-concept. In short, when our group seems to be good, we feel good; when our group seems to be bad, we feel bad.

In some cases, we may be able to feel good about our group memberships even when our own individual outcomes are not so positive. Schmitt, Silvia, and Branscombe (2000) had groups of female college students perform a creativity task and then gave them feedback indicating that although they themselves had performed very poorly, another woman in their group had performed very well. Furthermore, in some experimental conditions, the women were told that the research was comparing the scores of men and women (which was designed to increase categorization by gender). In these conditions, rather than being saddened by the upward comparison with the other woman, participants used the successful performance of the other woman to feel good about themselves, as women.

When Ingroup Favoritism Does Not Occur

Although people have a general tendency to show ingroup favoritism, there are least some cases in which it does not occur. One situation in which ingroup favoritism is unlikely is when the members of the ingroup are clearly inferior to other groups on an important dimension. The players on a baseball team that has not won a single game all season are unlikely to be able to feel very good about themselves as a team and are pretty much forced to concede that the outgroups are better, at least as far as playing baseball is concerned. Members of low-status groups show less ingroup favoritism than do members of high-status groups and may even display outgroup favoritism, in which they admit that the other groups are better than they are (Clark & Clark, 1947).

Another case in which people judge other members of the ingroup very negatively occurs when a member of one's own group behaves in a way that threatens the positive image of the ingroup. A student who behaves in a way unbecoming to university students, or a teammate who does not seem to value the importance of the team, is disparaged by the other group members, often more than the same behavior from an outgroup member would be. *The strong devaluation of ingroup members who threaten the positive image and identity of the ingroup* is known as the black sheep effect.

Personality and Cultural Determinants of Ingroup Favoritism

To this point, we have considered ingroup favoritism as a natural part of everyday life. Because the tendency to favor the ingroup is a normal byproduct of self-concern, most people do, by and large, prefer their ingroups over outgroups. And yet not everyone is equally ingroup-favoring in all situations. There are a number of individual difference measures that predict prejudice, and these differences become particularly likely to show up under circumstances in which the desire to protect the self becomes important (Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003).

Some people are more likely than others to show ingroup favoritism because they are particularly likely to rely on their group memberships to create a positive social identity. These differences in group identification can be measured through self-report measures such as the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The scale assesses the extent to which the individual values his or her memberships in groups in public and private ways, as well as the extent to which he or she gains social identity from those groups. People who score higher on the scale show more ingroup favoritism in comparison with those who score lower on it (Stangor & Thompson, 2002). The scale, from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992), is shown in Table 12.2.

Table 12.2 The Collective Self-Esteem Scale

Membership	I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to.
	I feel I don't have much to offer to the social groups I belong to [R].
	I am a cooperative participant in the social groups I belong to.
	I often feel I'm an unclean member of my social group [R].
Private	I often regret that I belong to some of the social groups I do [R].
	In general, I'm glad to be a member of the social groups I belong to.
	Overall, I often feel that the social groups of which I am a member are not worthwhile [R].
	I feel good about the social groups I belong to.
Public	Overall, my social groups are considered good by others.
	Most people consider my social groups, on the average, to be more ineffective than other social groups [R].
	In general, others respect the social groups that I am a member of.
	In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy [R].
Identity	Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself [R].
	The social groups I belong to are an important reflection of who I am.
	The social groups I belong to are unimportant in my sense of what kind of a person I am [R].
	In general, belonging to social groups is an important part of my self-image.

[R] = Item is reversed before scoring.

Another personality dimension that relates to the desires to protect and enhance the self and the ingroup and thus also relates to greater ingroup favoritism, and in some cases prejudice toward outgroups, is the personality dimension of authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950; Altemeyer, 1988). Authoritarianism is *a personality dimension that characterizes people who prefer things to be simple rather than complex and who tend to hold traditional and conventional values*. Authoritarians are ingroup-favoring in part because they have a need to self-enhance and in part because they prefer simplicity and

thus find it easy to think simply: “We are all good and they are all less good.” Political conservatives tend to show more ingroup favoritism than do political liberals, perhaps because the former are more concerned with protecting the ingroup from threats posed by others (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Stangor & Leary, 2006).

People with strong goals toward other-concern display less ingroup favoritism and less prejudice. People who view it as particularly important to connect with and respect other people—those who are more focused on tolerance and fairness toward others—are less ingroup-favoring and more positive toward the members of groups other than their own. The desire to be fair and to accept others can be assessed by individual difference measures such as desire to control one’s prejudice (Plant & Devine, 1998) and humanism (Katz & Hass, 1988).

Social dominance orientation (SDO) is *a personality variable that refers to the tendency to see and to accept inequality among different groups* (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1995). People who score high on measures of SDO believe that there are and should be status differences among social groups, and they do not see these as wrong. High SDO individuals agree with statements such as “Some groups of people are simply inferior to other groups,” “In getting what you want, it is sometimes necessary to use force against other groups,” and “It’s OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others.” Those who are low on SDO, on the other hand, believe that all groups are relatively equal in status and tend to disagree with these statements. People who score higher on SDO also show greater ingroup favoritism.

Stereotyping and prejudice also varies across cultures. Spencer-Rodgers, Williams, Hamilton, Peng, and Wang (2007) tested the hypothesis that Chinese participants, because of their collectivist orientation, would find social groups more important than would Americans (who are more individualistic) and that as a result, they would be more likely to infer personality traits on the basis of group membership—that is, to stereotype. Supporting the hypothesis, they found that Chinese participants made stronger stereotypical trait inferences than Americans did on the basis of a target’s membership in a fictitious group.

Key Takeaways

- Ingroup favoritism is a fundamental and evolutionarily functional aspect of human perception, and it occurs even in groups that are not particularly meaningful.
- Ingroup favoritism is caused by a variety of variables, but particularly important is self-concern: We experience positive social identity as a result of our membership in valued social groups.
- Ingroup favoritism develops early in children and influences our behavior toward ingroup and outgroup members in a variety of ways.
- Personality dimensions that relate to ingroup favoritism include authoritarianism and social dominance orientation—dimensions that relate to less ingroup favoritism include a desire to control one’s prejudice and humanism.
- There are at least some cultural differences in the tendency to show ingroup favoritism and to stereotype others.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider some of the important social groups to which you belong. Do your group memberships lead to ingroup favoritism or even prejudice?
2. Describe a time when the members of one of your important social groups behaved in a way that increased group identity (e.g., showing the black sheep effect). What was the outcome of the actions?

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5.10: Social Comparison

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When athletes compete in a race, they are able to observe and compare their performance against those of their competitors. In the same way, all people naturally engage in mental comparisons with the people around them during the course of daily life. These evaluations can impact our motivation and feelings. In this module, you will learn about the process of social comparison: its definition, consequences, and the factors that affect it.

learning objectives

- Understand the reasons people make social comparisons.
- Identify consequences of social comparison.
- Understand the Self-Evaluation Maintenance Model.
- Explain situational factors that can affect social comparison.

Introduction: Social Comparison

One pleasant Saturday afternoon, Mr. Jones arrives home from the car dealership in a brand-new Mercedes-Benz *C-Class*, the entry-level sedan in the Mercedes family of cars. Although Mercedes-Benzes are common in Europe, they are often viewed as status symbols in Mr. Jones' neighborhood in North America. This new car is a huge upgrade from his previous car. Excited, Mr. Jones immediately drives around the block and into town to show it off. He is thrilled with his purchase for a full week—that is, until he sees his neighbor across the street, Mr. Smith, driving a brand-new Mercedes *S-Class*, the highest tier of Mercedes sedans. Mr. Smith notices Mr. Jones from a distance and waves to him with a big smile. Climbing into his *C-Class*, Mr. Jones suddenly feels disappointed with his purchase and even feels envious of Mr. Smith. Now his *C-Class* feels just as uncoo as his old car.

Mr. Smith is experiencing the effects of **social comparison**. Occurring frequently in our lives, social comparison shapes our perceptions, memory, and behavior—even regarding the most trivial of issues. In this module, we will take a closer look at the reasons we make social comparisons and the consequences of the social comparison process.



Social comparison is a well-known concept to advertisers. They create idealized images that influence consumers' self-perceptions as well as the things they feel they must buy in order to be satisfied. [Image: SenseiAlan, http://goo.gl/XOwjq5, CC BY 2.0, goo.gl/T4qgSp]

Social Comparison: Basics

In 1954, psychologist Leon Festinger hypothesized that people compare themselves to others in order to fulfill a basic human desire: the need for self-evaluation. He called this process *social comparison theory*. At the core of his theory is the idea that people

come to know about themselves—their own abilities, successes, and personality—by comparing themselves with others. These comparisons can be divided into two basic categories.

In one category, we consider social norms and the opinions of others. Specifically, we compare our own opinions and values to those of others when our own self-evaluation is unclear. For example, you might not be certain about your position on a hotly contested issue, such as the legality of abortion. Or, you might not be certain about which fork to use first in a multi-course place setting. In these types of instances people are prone to look toward others—to make social comparisons—to help fill in the gaps.

Imagine an American exchange student arriving in India for the first time, a country where the culture is drastically different from his own. He notices quickly through observing others—i.e., social comparison—that when greeting a person, it is normal to place his own palms together rather than shaking the other person's hand. This comparison informs him of how he should behave in the surrounding social context.



When comparing, similarity is important. A professional athlete is far more likely to compare his or her own performance against that of other professional athletes than that of an amateur. [Image: Doma-w, https://goo.gl/2NM9Ii, CC BY 3.0, goo.gl/b58TcB]

The second category of social comparison pertains to our abilities and performance. In these cases, the need for self-evaluation is driven by another fundamental desire: to perform better and better—as Festinger (1954) put it, "a unidirectional drive upward." In essence, we compare our performance not only to evaluate ourselves but also to benchmark our performance related to another person. If we observe or even anticipate that a specific person is doing better than us at some ability then we may be motivated to boost our performance level. Take, for example, a realistic scenario where Olivia uses social comparison to gauge her abilities: Olivia is a high school student who often spends a few hours in her backyard shooting a soccer ball at her homemade goal. A friend of hers suggests she try out for the school's soccer team. Olivia accepts her friend's suggestion, although nervously, doubting she's good enough to make the team. On the day of tryouts, Olivia gets her gear ready and starts walking towards the soccer field. As she approaches, she feels butterflies in her stomach and her legs get wobbly. But, glancing towards the other candidates who have arrived early to take a few practice shots at the goal, she notices that their aim is inconsistent and they frequently miss the goal. Seeing this, Olivia feels more relaxed, and she confidently marches onto the field, ready to show everyone her skills.

Relevance and Similarity

There are important factors, however, that determine whether people will engage in social comparison. First, the performance dimension has to be relevant to the self (Festinger, 1954). For example, if excelling in academics is more important to you than excelling in sports, you are more likely to compare yourself with others in terms of academic rather than athletic performance. Relevance is also important when assessing opinions. If the issue at hand is relevant to you, you will compare your opinion to others; if not, you most likely won't even bother. Relevance is thus a *necessary precondition* for social comparison.

A secondary question is, " to whom do people compare themselves ?" Generally speaking, people compare themselves to those who are similar (Festinger, 1954; Goethals & Darley, 1977), whether similar in personal characteristics (e.g., gender, ethnic background, hair color, etc.) or in terms of performance (e.g., both being of comparable ability or both being neck-and-neck in a race). For example, a casual tennis player will not compare her performance to that of a professional, but rather to that of another casual tennis player. The same is true of opinions. People will cross-reference their own opinions on an issue with others who are similar to them rather than dissimilar (e.g., ethnic background or economic status).

Direction of Comparison

Social comparison is a bi-directional phenomenon where we can compare ourselves to people who are better than us—"**upward comparisons**"—or worse than us—"**downward comparisons**." Engaging in either of these two comparisons on a performance dimension can affect our self-evaluation. On one hand, upward comparisons on relevant dimensions can threaten our self-evaluation and jeopardize **self-esteem** (Tesser, 1988). On the other hand, they can also lead to joy and admiration for others' accomplishments on dimensions that are not relevant to the self, where one's self-evaluation is not under threat. For example, an academic overachiever who distinguishes himself by having two advanced degrees, both a PhD and a law degree, may not enjoy meeting another individual with a PhD, a law degree, and an MBA, but may well enjoy meeting a fellow overachiever in a domain that is not self-relevant, such as a famous NASCAR racer or professional hockey player.

Downward comparisons may boost our self-evaluation on relevant dimensions, leading to a **self-enhancement effect** (Wills, 1981), such as when an individual suffering from an illness makes downward comparisons with those suffering even more. A person enduring treatment for cancer, for instance, might feel better about his own side effects if he learns that an acquaintance suffered worse side effects from the same treatment. More recent findings have also shown that downward comparisons can also lead to feelings of scorn (Fiske, 2011), such as when those of a younger generation look down upon the elderly. In these cases, the boost to self-evaluation is so strong that it leads to an exaggerated sense of pride.

Interestingly, the direction of comparison and a person's emotional response can also depend on the **counterfactual**—"what might have been"—that comes most easily to mind. For example, one might think that an Olympic silver medalist would feel happier than a bronze medalist. After all, placing second is more prestigious than placing third. However, a classic study by Victoria Medvec, Scott Madey, and Thomas Gilovich (1995) found the opposite effect: bronze medalists were actually happier than silver medalists. The reason for this effect is that silver medalist's focus on having fallen short of achieving the gold (*so close!*), essentially turning a possible downward comparison into an upward comparison; whereas the bronze medalists recognize they came close to not winning any medal, essentially turning a possible upward comparison (to another medalist) into a downward comparison to those who did not even receive a medal.

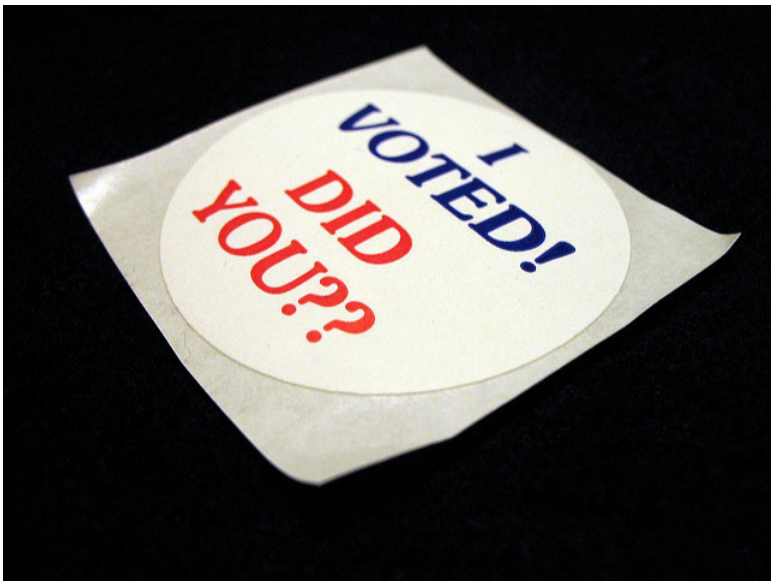
	Upward Comparison	**Downward Comparison**
Positive Effects	Hope, Inspiration	Gratitude
Negative Effects	Dissatisfaction, Envy	Scorn

Table 1: The effects of social comparison.

Consequences of Social Comparison

The social comparison process has been associated with numerous consequences. For one, social comparison can impact self-esteem (Tesser, 1988), especially when doing well relative to others. For example, having the best final score in a class can increase

your self-esteem quite a bit. Social comparison can also lead to feelings of regret (White, Langer, Yariv, & Welch, 2006), as when comparing the negative outcome of one's investment strategy to the positive outcome of a different strategy taken by a neighbor. Social comparison can also lead to feelings of envy (Fiske, 2011; Salovey & Rodin, 1984), as when someone with thinning hair envies the thick hair of a colleague.



Comparing your behavior to that of other people might make you jealous, regretful or more motivated. Lapel stickers and online badges that proclaim "I voted" or "I gave blood" are common examples of leveraging social comparison to achieve positive social outcomes. [Image: CAVE CANEM, http://goo.gl/ifKSiE, CC BY 2.0, goo.gl/v4Y0Zv]

Social comparison can also have interesting behavioral consequences. If you were to observe a discrepancy in performance between yourself and another person, then you might behave more competitively (Garcia, Tor, & Schiff, 2013), as you attempt to minimize the discrepancy. If, for example, you are among the top 10% on your class mid-term you might feel competitive with the other top students. Although competition can raise performance it can also take more problematic forms, from inflicting actual harm to making a comment to another person. These kinds of behaviors are likely to arise when the situation following the social comparison does not provide the opportunity to self-repair, such as another chance to compete in a race or retake a test (Johnson, 2012). However, when later opportunities to self-repair do exist, a more positive form of competitive motivation arises, whether that means running harder in a race or striving to earn a higher test score.

Self-Evaluation Maintenance Model

The **self-evaluation maintenance** (SEM; Tesser, 1988) model builds on social comparison theory. SEM points to a range of psychological forces that help and maintain our self-evaluation and self-esteem. In addition to relevance and similarity, SEM reveals the importance of relationship closeness. It turns out that relationship closeness—where two people stand on the continuum from being complete strangers to being intimate friends—affects self-evaluations.

For example, in one study, Tesser and Smith (1980) asked people to play a verbal game in which they were given the opportunity to receive clues from a partner. These clues could be used to help them guess the correct word in a word game. Half the participants were told the game was related to intelligence whereas the other half were not. Additionally, half the participants were paired with a close friend but the other half played with a stranger. Results show that participants who were led to believe the task was self-relevant or having to do with intelligence provided more difficult clues when their partner was a friend versus a stranger—suggesting a competitive uptick associated with relationship closeness. However, when performance was implied to be irrelevant to the self, partners gave easier clues to friends than strangers.

SEM can predict which of our friends and which of our comparison dimensions are self-relevant (Tesser & Campbell, 2006; Zuckerman & Jost, 2001). For example, suppose playing chess is highly self-relevant for you. In this case you will naturally compare yourselves to other chess players. Now, suppose that your chess-playing friend consistently beats you. In fact, each time you play she beats you by a wider and wider margin. SEM would predict that one of two things will likely happen: (1) winning at chess will no longer be self-relevant to you, or (2) you will no longer be friends with this individual. In fact, if the first option

occurs—you lose interest in competing—you will begin to bask in the glory of your chess playing friend as his or her performance approaches perfection.

These psychological processes have real world implications! They may determine who is hired in an organization or who is promoted at work. For example, suppose you are a faculty member of a university law school. Your work performance is appraised based on your teaching and on your academic publications. Although you do not have the most publications in your law school, you do have the most publications in prestigious journals.



It is common advice in the business world for managers to "hire your replacement." In other words, to hire people with as much talent as possible, even those who could do the job better than the manager. The SEM model suggests that managers may prefer sub-optimal candidates who aren't likely to challenge their standing in the organization. [Image: Ethan, http://goo.gl/Inqxas, CC BY 2.0, goo.gl/v4Y0Zv]

Now, suppose that you are chairing a committee to hire a new faculty member. One candidate has even more top tier publications than you, while another candidate has the most publications in general of all the faculty members. How do you think social comparison might influence your choice of applicants? Research suggests that someone in your hypothetical shoes would likely favor the second candidate over the first candidate: people will actively champion the candidate who does not threaten their standing on a relevant dimension in an organization (Garcia, Song, & Tesser, 2010). In other words, the SEM forces are so powerful that people will essentially advocate for a candidate whom they feel is inferior!

Individual Differences

It is also worth mentioning that social comparison and its effects on self-evaluation will often depend on **personality** and **individual differences**. For example, people with **mastery goals**(Poortvliet, Janssen, Van Yperen, & Van de Vliert, 2007) may not interpret an upward comparison as a threat to the self but more as challenge, and a hopeful sign that one can achieve a certain level of performance. Another individual difference is whether one has a "**fixed mindset**" or "**growth mindset**" (Dweck, 2007). People with fixed mindsets think that their abilities and talents cannot change; thus, an upward comparison will likely threaten their self-evaluation and prompt them to experience negative consequences of social comparison, such as competitive behavior, envy, or unhappiness. People with growth mindsets, however, are likely to interpret an upward comparison as a challenge, and an opportunity to improve themselves.

Situational factors

Social comparison researchers are actively exploring situational factors that can likewise influence degrees of social comparison:

Number

As the number of comparison targets (i.e., the number of people with whom you can compare) increases, social comparison tends to decrease. For example, imagine you are running a race with competitors of similar ability as your own, and the top 20% will receive a prize. Do you think you would try harder if there were only 10 people in the race, or if there were 100? The findings on **N-Effect** (Garcia & Tor, 2009; Tor & Garcia, 2010) suggest the answer is 10 . Even though the expected value of winning is the same in both cases, people will try harder when there are fewer people. In fact, findings suggest that as the number of SAT test-takers at a particular venue increases, the lower the average SAT score for that venue will be (Garcia & Tor, 2009). One of the mechanisms behind the *N-Effect* is social comparison. As the number of competitors increases, social comparison—one of the engines behind competitive motivation—becomes less important. Perhaps you have experienced this if you have had to give class presentations. As the number of presenters increases, you feel a decreasing amount of comparison pressure.

Local



It is natural to make comparisons between oneself and others on a variety of different standards and to compare oneself with a variety of different people. Comparisons to friends are among the most influential of all. [Image: Corrie M, http://goo.gl/FRbOfQ, CC BY-ND 2.0, goo.gl/FuDJ6c]

Research on the **local dominance effect** (Zell & Alicke, 2010) also provides insights about social comparison. People are more influenced by social comparison when the comparison is more localized rather than being broad and general. For example, if you wanted to evaluate your height by using social comparison, you could compare your height to a good friend, a group of friends, people in your workplace, or even the average height of people living in your city. Although any of these comparisons is hypothetically possible people generally rely on more local comparisons. They are more likely to compare with friends or co-workers than they are to industry or national averages. So, if you are among the tallest in your group of friends, it may very well give you a bigger boost to your self-esteem, even if you're still among the shortest individuals at the national level.

Proximity to a Standard

Research suggests that social comparison involves the **proximity** of a standard—such as the #1 ranking or other qualitative threshold. One consequence of this is an increase in competitive behavior. For example, in childhood games, if someone shouts, "First one to the tree is the coolest-person-in the-world!" then the children who are nearest the tree will tug and pull at each other for the lead. However, if someone shouts, "Last one there is a rotten-egg!" then the children who are in last place will be the ones tugging and pulling each other to get ahead. In the proximity of a standard, social comparison concerns increase. We also see this in rankings. Rivals ranked #2 and #3, for instance, are less willing to maximize joint gains (in which they both benefit) if it means their opponent will benefit *more*, compared to rivals ranked #202 and #203 (Garcia, Tor, & Gonzalez, 2006; Garcia & Tor, 2007). These latter rivals are so far from the #1 rank (i.e., the standard) that it does not bother them if their opponent benefits more than them. Thus, social comparison concerns are only important in the proximity of a standard.

Social Category Lines

Social comparison can also happen between groups. This is especially the case when groups come from different social categories versus the same **social category**. For example, if students were deciding what kind of music to play at the high school prom, one option would be to simply flip a coin—say, heads for hip-hop, tails for pop. In this case, everyone represents the same social category—high school seniors—and social comparison isn't an issue. However, if all the boys wanted hip-hop and all the girls wanted pop flipping a coin is not such an easy solution as it privileges one social category over another (Garcia & Miller, 2007). For more on this, consider looking into the research literature about the difficulties of win-win scenarios between different social categories (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971; Turner, Brown, & Tajfel, 1979).

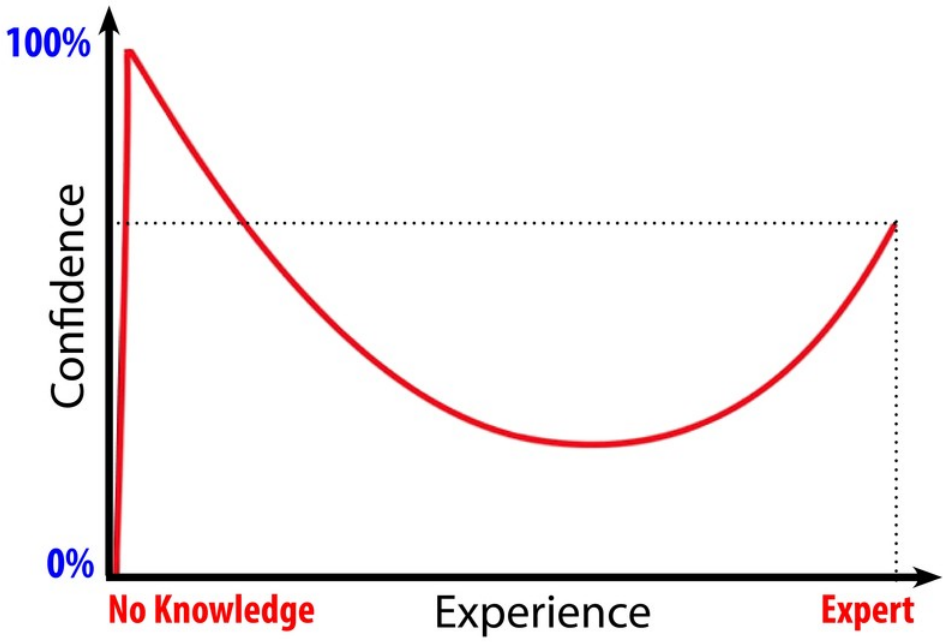
Related Phenomena

Frog Pond Effect

One interesting phenomenon of social comparison is the **Frog Pond Effect**. As the name suggests, its premise can be illustrated using the simple analogy of a frog in a pond: as a frog, would you rather be in a small pond where you're a big frog, or a large pond where you're a small frog? According to Marsh, Trautwein, Ludtke and Koller (2008), people in general had a better academic self-concept if they were a big frog in a small pond (e.g., the top student in their local high school) rather than a small frog in a large one (e.g., one of many good students at an Ivy League university). In a large study of students, they found that school-average ability can have a negative impact on the academic self-esteem of a student when the average ability is 1 standard deviation higher than normal (i.e., a big pond). In other words, average students have a higher academic self-concept when attending a below-average school (big fish in a small pond), and they have a lower academic self-concept when attending an above-average school (small fish in a big pond) (Marsh, 1987; Marsh & Parker, 1984).

The Dunning-Kruger Effect

Another related topic to social comparison is the **Dunning-Kruger Effect**. The Dunning-Kruger effect, as explained by Dunning, Johnson, Ehrlinger and Kruger (2003), addresses the fact that unskilled people often think they are on par or superior to their peers in tasks such as test-taking abilities. That is, they are overconfident. Basically, they fail to accurately compare themselves or their skills within their surroundings. For example, Dunning et al. (2003) asked students to disclose how well they thought they had done on an exam they'd just taken. The bottom 25% of students with the lowest test scores overestimated their performance by approximately 30%, thinking their performance was above the 50th percentile. This estimation problem doesn't only apply to poor performers, however. According to Dunning et al. (2003), top performers tend to *under*estimate their skills or percentile ranking in their surrounding context. Some explanations are provided by Dunning et al. (2003) for this effect on both the good and poor performers:The poor performers, compared to their more capable peers, lack specific logical abilities similar to the logic necessary to do some of the tasks/tests in these studies and, as such, cannot really distinguish which questions they are getting right or wrong. This is known as the double-curse explanation. However, the good performers do not have this particular logic problem and are actually quite good at estimating their raw scores. Ironically, the good performers usually overestimate how well the people around them are doing and therefore devaluate their own performance. As a result, most people tend to think they are above average in what they do, when in actuality not everyone can be above average.



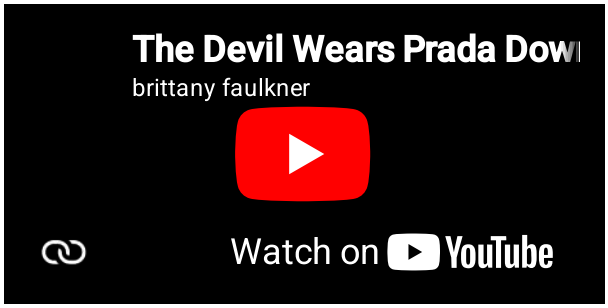
The Dunning-Kruger Effect shows that the least experienced and least knowledgeable people are over-confident. These people don't know what they don't know and are more likely to overestimate their own abilities.

Conclusion

Social comparison is a natural psychological tendency and one that can exert a powerful influence on the way we feel and behave. Many people act as if social comparison is an ugly phenomenon and one to be avoided. This sentiment is at the heart of phrases like "keeping up with the Joneses" and "the rat race," in which it is assumed that people are primarily motivated by a desire to beat others. In truth, social comparison has many positive aspects. Just think about it: how could you ever gauge your skills in chess without having anyone to compare yourself to? It would be nearly impossible to ever know just how good your chess skills are, or even what criteria determine "good" vs. "bad" chess skills. In addition, the engine of social comparison can also provide the push you need to rise to the occasion and increase your motivation, and therefore make progress toward your goals.

Outside Resources

Video: Downward Comparison





Video: Dunning-Kruger Effect





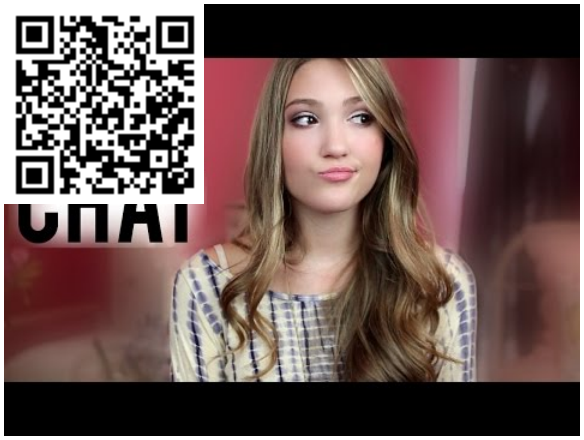
Video: Social Comparison overview



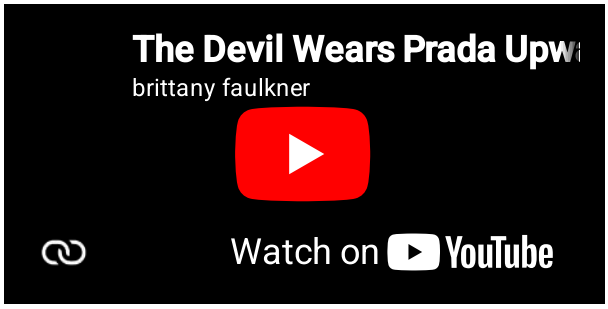


Video: Social Media and Comparison





Video: Upward Comparison





Web: Self-Compassion to counter the negative effects of social comparison

http://self-compassion.org/the-three-elements-of-self-compassion-2/

Discussion Questions

1. On what do you compare yourself with others? Qualities such as attractiveness and intelligence? Skills such as school performance or athleticism? Do others also make these same types of comparisons or does each person make a unique set? Why do you think this is?
2. How can making comparisons to others help you?
3. One way to make comparisons is to compare yourself with your own past performance. Discuss a time you did this. Could this example be described as an “upward” or “downward” comparison? How did this type of comparison affect you?

Vocabulary

Counterfactual thinking

Mentally comparing actual events with fantasies of what might have been possible in alternative scenarios.

Downward comparison

Making mental comparisons with people who are perceived to be inferior on the standard of comparison.

Dunning-Kruger Effect

The tendency for unskilled people to be overconfident in their ability and highly skilled people to underestimate their ability.

Fixed mindset

The belief that personal qualities such as intelligence are traits that cannot be developed. People with fixed mindsets often underperform compared to those with “growth mindsets”

Frog Pond Effect

The theory that a person’s comparison group can affect their evaluations of themselves. Specifically, people have a tendency to have lower self-evaluations when comparing themselves to higher performing groups.

Growth mindset

The belief that personal qualities, such as intelligence, can be developed through effort and practice.

Individual differences

Psychological traits, abilities, aptitudes and tendencies that vary from person to person.

Local dominance effect

People are generally more influenced by social comparison when that comparison is personally relevant rather than broad and general.

Mastery goals

Goals that are focused primarily on learning, competence, and self-development. These are contrasted with “performance goals” that are focused on the quality of a person’s performance.

N-Effect

The finding that increasing the number of competitors generally decreases one’s motivation to compete.

Personality

A person's relatively stable patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior.

Proximity

The relative closeness or distance from a given comparison standard. The further from the standard a person is, the less important he or she considers the standard. When a person is closer to the standard he/she is more likely to be competitive.

Self-enhancement effect

The finding that people can boost their own self-evaluations by comparing themselves to others who rank lower on a particular comparison standard.

Self-esteem

The feeling of confidence in one's own abilities or worth.

Self-evaluation maintenance (SEM)

A model of social comparison that emphasizes one's closeness to the comparison target, the relative performance of that target person, and the relevance of the comparison behavior to one's self-concept.

Social category

Any group in which membership is defined by similarities between its members. Examples include religious, ethnic, and athletic groups.

Social comparison

The process by which people understand their own ability or condition by mentally comparing themselves to others.

Upward comparisons

Making mental comparisons to people who are perceived to be superior on the standard of comparison.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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6.1: The Lost Cell Phone



Figure 1.1

A New York City woman lost her cell phone in the back of a taxi cab. Sasha Gomez, 16, of Queens, ended up with the phone. She decided to keep it and use it. She did not realize the consequences. She was humiliated, harassed, and arrested. And she became the subject of a public shaming ritual only possible by today's media in today's culture.

The phone was an expensive model, a T-Mobile Sidekick that sold for $350. Sasha began using the phone to take photographs and send instant messages to friends and family. The woman who lost the phone thought she would never see the phone again. She bought another Sidekick, logged onto her account and found that the old phone was being used. She saw photographs and messages by Sasha. The woman wanted her old phone back. She had a media-savvy friend, Evan Guttman. Evan was able to track down Sasha by her instant messages. He contacted Sasha and asked her to return the phone to his friend. "Basically, she told me to get lost," Evan later told *The New York Times*.Nicholas Confessore, "Tale of a Lost Cellphone, and Untold Static," *The New York Times*, June 21, 2006. Web. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/21/nyregion/21sidekick.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=evan+guttman&st=nyt

Evan decided to fight for his friend's phone—through the media. He put up a web page that told the story of the lost cell phone. He put up the pictures of Sasha and her family. The story spread. Evan began getting dozens and then hundreds of sympathetic emails from other people who had lost phones and understood his frustration with Sasha. Two technology blogs, Diggs and Gizmodo, linked to the story and web page. Evan then got thousands of emails, some from as far off as Africa and Asia. Lawyers and police officers contacted Evan about property law and told him how to approach the police. Some people went further than writing supportive emails. They found Sasha's MySpace page. They sent Sasha and her friends messages demanding the return of the phone. Other people learned her home address in Queens, drove by her apartment building and shouted "thief."

Sasha and her family were outraged and alarmed. They contacted Evan. Sasha still refused to return the phone. Her brother too communicated with Evan. He said he was a military policeman, and he warned Evan to leave Sasha alone. Evan posted those comments online. He soon heard from others in the military. They told him that the brother's threats were a violation of military policy. They said they would report the threats to the brother's superiors.

Armed with all this information, Evan contacted Sasha one more time. He said he and his friend would next go the police. Evan said he was threatened again. He and his friend went to the police who then arrested Sasha. The charge was possession of stolen property. Sasha's mother came forward and said she had bought the phone for $50 on a subway platform and given it to Sasha. Police confiscated the phone for the original owner. And Evan became a minor cultural celebrity. The story appeared in *The New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune* and was broadcast on MSNBC and other outlets. It was a modern morality tale caused by, and then made possible by, the intersection of media technology and culture.

I thought the story of the lost cell phone would be a great introduction for a text on understanding media and culture and used *The New York Times* story to write the previous paragraphs. Long after, when I showed the introduction to a colleague, he looked at me and said, "Are you kidding?" He showed me a then-recent book by media scholar Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*, a book on the power of organizing through new media. Shirky begins his book—with the same story of the lost cell phone. With some wry amusement over fate, I decided that I would keep my introduction as well. In some ways, the movement of the lost cell phone story from Evan's website through *The New York Times* through MSNBC through Clay Shirky's text through my book on understanding media and culture is symbolic, as we will see, of the multitude of flows between media and culture.

Understanding Media and Culture

This book's title tells its intent. It is written to help you understand media and culture. The media and culture are so much a part of our days that sometimes it is difficult to step back and appreciate and apprehend their great impact on our lives.

The book's title, and the book itself, begin with a focus squarely on media. Think of your typical day. If you are like many people, you wake to a digital alarm clock or perhaps your cell phone. Soon after waking, you likely have a routine that involves some media. Some people immediately check the cell phone for text messages. Others will turn on the computer and check Facebook, email, or websites. Some people read the newspaper. Others listen to music on an iPod or CD. Some people will turn on the television and watch a weather channel, cable news, or Sports Center. Heading to work or class, you may chat on a cell phone or listen to music. Your classes likely employ various types of media from course management software to PowerPoint presentations to DVDs to YouTube. You may return home and relax with video games, television, movies, more Facebook, or music. You connect with friends on campus and beyond with text messages or Facebook. And your day may end as you fall asleep to digital music. Media for most of us are entwined with almost every aspect of life and work. Understanding media will not only help you appreciate the role of media in your life but also help you be a more informed citizen, a more savvy consumer, and a more successful worker. Media influence all those aspects of life as well.

The book's title also has links to a highly influential book in media studies, *Understanding Media*, by the social theorist and critic, Marshall McLuhan.Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964. In the midst of the 20th century and the rise of television as a mass medium, McLuhan foresaw how profoundly media would shape human lives. His work on media spanned four decades, from the 1950s to his death in 1980. In the 1960s and 1970s, during the height of television's popularity and the emergence of computers, he became an international celebrity. He appeared on magazine covers and television talk shows. He had a cameo appearance in the Woody Allen film, *Annie Hall*. *Wired* magazine listed him on its masthead as "patron saint." In universities, however, McLuhan was often dismissed, perhaps because of his celebrity, his outlandish style, and his broad and sweeping declarations. Yet as media continued to develop in ways anticipated by his writings, McLuhan again found an audience in media studies.

In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan offered some provocative thoughts. He said that the media themselves were far more important than any content they carried. Indeed, he said, each medium, such as print or broadcast, physically affects the human central nervous system in a certain way. Media influence the way the brain works and how it processes information. They create new patterns of thought and behavior. Looking back over time, McLuhan found that people and societies were shaped by the dominant media of their time. For example, McLuhan argued, people and societies of the printing press era were shaped by that medium. And, he said, people and societies were being shaped in new ways by electronic media. Summing up, in one of his well-known phrases, he said, "The medium is the message."

This book's title uses McLuhan's title—and adds culture. McLuhan well understood how media shape culture. However, one weakness in McLuhan's work, especially his early work, is that he did not fully account for how culture shapes media. Culture can be a vague and empty term. Sometimes culture is defined in a very narrow sense as "the arts" or some sort of fashionable refinement. Another definition of culture is much more expansive, however. In this broader sense, culture is a particular way of life and how that life is acted out each day in works, practices, and activities. Thus, we can talk about Italian culture, Javanese culture,

or the culture of the ancient Greeks. Another communication theorist, James Carey, elegantly captures this expansive view of culture. In “A Cultural Approach to Communication,” Carey wrote the following:

“We create, express, and convey our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality through the construction of a variety of symbol systems: art, science, journalism, religion, common sense, mythology. How do we do this? What are the differences between these forms? What are the historical and comparative variations in them? How do changes in communication technology influence what we can concretely create and apprehend? How do groups in society struggle over the definition of what is real?”James Carey, “A Cultural Approach to Communication,” in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. 2nd ed. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 24.

That large sense of culture will be used in this book. The chapters to come will provide an in-depth look at the relationship of media and culture. We will look at many kinds of media and how those media shape and are shaped by culture. Media and culture shape each other around the globe, of course. The focus in this book primarily will be on the United States. This focus is not because U.S. media have such global reach but because understanding media and culture in one setting will allow you to think about media and culture in other settings. This intellectual journey should be interesting and fun. You live, study, work, and play with media in culture. By the book’s end, you should have a much deeper appreciation and understanding of them.

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6.2: Intersection of American Media and Culture

Learning objectives

- Distinguish between mass communication and mass media.
- Define culture.
- Pose questions that will be explored in the rest of the text.

Mass Communication, Mass Media, and Culture

We use all kinds of terms to talk about media. It will be useful to clarify them. It will be especially important to distinguish between mass communication and mass media, and to attempt a working definition of culture. You likely are reading this book as part of a class dedicated to mass communication, so let's start with mass communication first. Note that adjective: *mass*. Here is a horrible definition of *mass* from an online dictionary: Of, relating to, characteristic of, directed at, or attended by a large number of people. But the definition gets the point across. Communication can take place just between two people, or among a few people, or maybe even within one person who is talking to himself. *Mass* communication is communication of, relating to, characteristic of, directed at, or attended by a large number of people. That's pretty ugly. Let's try the following: **Mass communication** refers to communication transmitted to large segments of the population.

How does that happen? The transmission of mass communication happens using one or more of many different kinds of **media** (people sometimes forget that media is the plural of the singular, *medium*). A medium is simply an instrument or means of transmission. It can be two tin cans connected by a string. It can be television. It can be the Internet. A mass medium is a means of transmission designed to reach a wide audience. It is not tin cans on a string, unless you have a lot of cans, but it can be television or the Internet. Media are more than one medium. So **mass media**refers to those means of transmission that are designed to reach a wide audience. Mass media are commonly considered to include radio, film, newspapers, magazines, books, and video games, as well as Internet blogs, podcasts, and video sharing.

Lastly, let's define culture a bit more. All this mass communication over mass media takes place among people in a particular time and place. Those people share ideas about reality and the world and themselves. They act out those ideas daily in their lives, work, and creative expressions, and they do so in ways that are different from other people in other places and other times. We can use *culture*to refer to the acting out of these shared ideas.

One of the great scholars of culture, anthropologist Clifford Geertz, offered this definition. He said, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (1973, 89). That's difficult language, but you can get the idea—culture is historically transmitted knowledge and attitudes toward life expressed in symbolic form. Or perhaps more simply, **culture** is the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of a social group, organization, or institution. It is OK if that still seems broad and fluid. Scholars too wrestle with the term because it must capture so much. Culture should not be easy to define.

What this book will do is bring together media and culture in the context of the American experience. Throughout American history, evolving media technologies have changed the way we relate socially, economically, and politically. Here's one example from long ago that is still talked about today. In 1960, the first televised presidential debates changed American history forever. The young senator, John F. Kennedy, looked wonderful on television. He appeared energetic, crisp and at ease, while Vice President Richard Nixon looked nervous and uncomfortable. His makeup was caked on. He hunched and slouched. People who listened to the debate on the radio considered it a tie. But most people who watched the debate on television believed that Kennedy crushed Nixon. Kennedy upset Nixon and won the presidency. A few months later, the newly-elected president gave credit to technology for changing public perceptions and enabling his win. He claimed that "it was TV more than anything else that turned the tide."Louis Menand, "Masters of the Matrix," *The New Yorker*, January 5, 2004.Ever since Kennedy, American presidential hopefuls have had to be increasingly television-ready and media savvy. Indeed, evolving technology has helped change what the American public wants out of its leaders.



Figure 1.2

In today's wired world of smartphones and streaming satellite feeds, our expectations of our leaders, celebrities, teachers, and even ourselves are changing in drastic ways. This book aims to provide you with the context, tools, and theories to understand changes brought about by the commingling of media and culture. Rather than telling you what to think, this book hopes to provide you with a framework to consider some of the crucial issues affecting media and culture in today's world. The following are some questions to consider now and to keep in mind as you move forward in this book:

- The second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century saw a huge growth of media forms, including radio, cinema, television, the Internet, and cell phone. Understanding the evolution of media technology can help you understanding not only the media of today but also the media of tomorrow. What then are the roots of media in U.S. history? What were the dominant forms of media present in the United States during the Revolution? The Industrial Revolution? World Wars I and II? How did these forms of media differ from the ones we have today? How did they help shape the way people interacted with and understood the world they lived in?
- Contemporary Americans have more means of getting information and entertainment than ever before. What are the major media present in the United States today? How do these forms of media interact with one another? How do they overlap? How are they distinct?
- What is the role of media in American culture today? Some people argue that dramatic and controversial events help fuel the demand for 24-hour news access. In June 2011, people around the world spent hours glued to coverage of the Casey Anthony trial. More recently, in November of 2011, sports coverage moved from football scores to the Penn State football sex-abuse scandal. What are some other ways that culture affects media? Conversely, how do media affect culture? Do violent television

shows and video games influence viewers to become more violent? Is the Internet making our culture more open and democratic, or more shallow and distracted?
- Though we may not (yet) have space-age technology, such as time travel, hover cars, and teleportation, today's electronic gadgets would probably stun Americans of a century ago. Will we be stunned by future media? How can today's media landscape help us understand what might await us in years to come? What will the future of American media and culture look like?

- Mass communication refers to a message transmitted to a large audience; the means of transmission is known as mass media. Many different kinds of mass media exist and have existed for centuries. Both have an effect on culture, which is a shared and expressed collection of behaviors, practices, beliefs, and values that are particular to a group, organization, or institution. Culture and media exert influence on each other in subtle, complex ways.
- The 1960 election is an example of how changes in media technology have had a major impact on culture. But the influence goes both ways, and culture shapes media in important ways, even how media evolve.

? Exercise 6.2.1

Reread the previous questions about media and culture. Write down some of your initial responses or reactions, based on your prior knowledge or intuition. Keep the piece of paper somewhere secure and return to it on the last day of the course. Were your responses on target? How has your understanding of media and culture changed? How might you answer questions differently now?

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6.3: How Did We Get Here? The Evolution of Culture

Learning Objectives

- Define cultural period, and give examples of recent cultural periods.
- Discuss particular characteristics of the modern era, and explain how it was shaped by the Industrial Revolution.
- Explain the ways that the postmodern era differs from the modern era.

We have spoken easily of *historical eras.* Can we speak of *cultural eras*? It can actually be a useful concept. There are many ways to divide time into cultural eras. But for our purposes, a cultural period is a time marked by a particular way of understanding the world through culture and technology. Changes in cultural periods are marked by fundamental changes in the way we perceive and understand the world. For example, you may have had readings about the "Middle Ages," a marker for European history from the 5th to 15th Century. In that era, technology and communication were in the hands of authorities like the king and church who could dictate what was "true." The Renaissance, the era that followed the Middle Ages, turned to the scientific method as a means of reaching truth through reason. This change in cultural period was galvanized by the printing press. (In 2008, *Wired* magazine's editor-in-chief proclaimed that the application of Internet technology through Google was about to render the scientific method obsolete.Chris Anderson, "The End of Theory: The Data Deluge Makes the Scientific Method Obsolete," *Wired*, June 23, 2008, http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/magazine/16-07/pb_theory (accessed July 15, 2010).) In each of these cultural eras, the nature of truth had not changed. What had changed was the way that humans used available technology to make sense of the world.

Using technology to make sense of the world? You likely can anticipate that for the purpose of studying culture and mass media, the modern and postmodern ages are some of the most exciting and relevant ones to explore, eras in which culture and technology have intersected like never before.

The Modern Age—Modernity

The Modern Age is the post-Medieval era, beginning roughly after the 14th century, a wide span of time marked in part by technological innovations, urbanization, scientific discoveries, and globalization. The Modern Age is generally split into two parts: the early and the late modern periods. Scholars often talk of the Modern Age as modernity.

The *early modern period* began with Gutenberg's invention of the movable type printing press in the late 15th century and ended in the late 18th century. Thanks to Gutenberg's press, the European population of the early modern period saw rising literacy rates, which led to educational reform. As noted earlier, Gutenberg's machine also greatly enabled the spread of knowledge, and in turn spurred the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. During the early modern period, transportation improved, politics became more secularized, capitalism spread, nation-states grew more powerful, and information became more widely accessible. Enlightenment ideals of reason, rationalism, and faith in scientific inquiry slowly began to replace the previously dominant authority of king and church.

Huge political, social, and economic changes marked the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the *late modern period*. The Industrial Revolution, which began in England around 1750, combined with the American Revolution in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789, indicated that the world was undergoing massive changes. The Industrial Revolution had far-reaching consequences. It did not merely change the way goods were produced—it also fundamentally changed the economic, social, and cultural framework of its time.

The Industrial Revolution doesn't have clear start or end dates. However, during the 19th century, several crucial inventions—the internal combustion engine, steam-powered ships, and railways, among others—led to other innovations across various industries. Suddenly, steam power and machine tools meant that production increased dramatically. But some of the biggest changes coming out of the Industrial Revolution were social in character. An economy based on manufacturing instead of agriculture meant that more people moved to cities, where techniques of mass production led to an emphasis on efficiency both in and out of the factory. Newly urbanized factory laborers no longer had the skill or time to produce their own food, clothing, or supplies and instead turned to consumer goods. Increased production led to increases in wealth, though income inequalities between classes also started to grow as well. Increased wealth and nonrural lifestyles led to the development of entertainment industries. Life changed rapidly.

It is no coincidence that the French and American Revolutions happened in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. The huge social changes created changes in political systems and thinking. In both France and America, the revolutions were inspired by a rejection of a monarchy in favor of national sovereignty and representative democracy. Both revolutions also heralded the rise of secular

society, as opposed to church-based authority systems. Democracy was well-suited to the so-called Age of Reason, with its ideals of individual rights and its belief in progress.

Media were central to these revolutions. As we have seen, the fusing of steam power and the printing press enabled the explosive expansion of books and newspapers. Literacy rates rose, as did support for public participation in politics. More and more people lived in the city, had an education, got their news from the newspaper, spent their wages on consumer goods, and identified themselves as citizens of an industrialized nation. Urbanization, mass literacy, and new forms of mass media contributed to a sense of mass culture that united people across regional, social, and cultural boundaries.

A last note on the terminology for the cultural era of the Modern Age or modernity: A similar term—modernism—also has come into use. However, modernism is a term for an artistic, cultural movement, rather than era. Modernism refers to the artistic movement of late-19th and early-20th centuries that arose out of the widespread changes that swept the world during that period. Most notably, modernism questioned the limitations of "traditional" forms of art and culture. Modernist art was in part a reaction against the Enlightenment's certainty of progress and rationality. It celebrated subjectivity through abstraction, experimentalism, surrealism, and sometimes pessimism or even nihilism. Prominent examples of modernist works include James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness novels, cubist paintings by Picasso, atonal compositions by Debussy, and absurdist plays by Pirandello. It's not too confusing—modernism was an artistic movement taking place during the modern age.

The Postmodern Age

If you go on to graduate study in almost any field in the humanities or social sciences, you will eventually encounter texts debating the *postmodern era*. While the exact definition and dates of the postmodern era are still debated by cultural theorists and philosophers, the general consensus is that the postmodern era began during the second half of the 20th century, and was marked by skepticism, self-consciousness, celebration of difference, and the reappraisal of modern conventions. Modernity—the Modern Age—took for granted scientific rationalism, the autonomous self, and the inevitability of progress. The postmodern age questioned or dismissed many of these assumptions. If the modern age valued order, reason, stability, and absolute truth, the postmodern age reveled in contingency, fragmentation, and instability. The aftermath of World War II, the Holocaust, the Cold War, the digitization of culture, the rise of the Internet, and numerous other factors fed into the skepticism and self-consciousness of the postmodern era.

Modernity's belief in objective truth is one of the major assumptions turned on its head in the postmodern era. Postmodernists instead took their cues from Schrödinger, the quantum physicist who famously devised a thought experiment in which a cat is placed inside a sealed box with a small amount of radiation that may or may not kill it. (Remember, this is a thought experiment, and is not real.) While the box remains sealed, Schrödinger proclaimed, the cat exists simultaneously in both states, dead *and* alive. Both potential states are equally true. Although the thought experiment was devised to explore issues in quantum physics, it appealed to postmodernists in its assertion of radical uncertainty. What is reality? Rather than being an absolute objective truth, accessible by rational procedures and experimentation, the status of reality was contingent, and depended on the observer.

"The postmodern" affected fields from philosophy to political science to literature. Novelists and poets, for example, embraced this new approach to reality. While Victorian novelists took pains to make their books seem more "real," postmodern narratives distrusted professions of "reality" and constantly reminded readers of the artificial nature of the story they were reading. The emphasis was not on the all-knowing author but instead on the reader. For the postmodernists, meaning was not injected into a work by its creator, but depended on the reader's subjective experience of the work.

Another way postmodernity differed from modernity was in its rejection of what philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard deemed "grand narratives." The Modern Age was marked by different large-scale theories that attempted to explain the totality of human experience, including theories of capitalism, Marxism, rationalism, Freudianism, Darwinism, fascism, and so on. But the postmodern era called into question the sorts of theories that claimed to explain everything at once. Such thinking, postmodernists warned, led to 20th-century totalitarian regimes, such as Hitler's Third Reich and the USSR under Stalin. The postmodern age, Lyotard theorized, was one of micro-narratives instead of grand narratives—that is, a multiplicity of small, localized understandings of the world, none of which can claim an ultimate or absolute truth. The diversity of human experience also was a marked feature of the postmodern world. As Lyotard noted, "eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture; one listens to reggae, watches a Western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and retro clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter for TV games."Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Postmodernists even mistrusted the idea of originality—the supposed arrogance of thinking one had a "new thought"—and freely borrowed across cultures and genres. William S. Burroughs gleefully proclaimed a sort of call-to-arms for his postmodern

generation of writers in 1985: “Out of the closets and into the museums, libraries, architectural monuments, concert halls, bookstores, recording studios and film studios of the world. Everything belongs to the inspired and dedicated thief.…Words, colors, light, sounds, stone, wood, bronze belong to the living artist. They belong to anyone who can use them. Loot the Louvre! *A bas l’originalité* (down with originality), the sterile and assertive ego that imprisons us as it creates. *Vive le sol* (long live the sun)-pure, shameless, total. We are not responsible. Steal anything in sight.” Burroughs’s words embodied the mixed skepticism and glee that marked the postmodern era. As the new millennium began, Bob Dylan’s album, “Love and Theft,” carried on Burroughs’s tradition. Its title and many of its lyrics are taken from numerous sources across cultures, eras and fields.

- A cultural period is a time marked by a particular way of understanding the world through culture and technology. Changes in cultural periods are marked by fundamental changes in the way we perceive and understand the world. The modern era began after the Middle Ages and lasted through the early decades of the 20th century, when the postmodern era began.
- The modern era was marked by Enlightenment philosophy, which focused on the individual and placed a high value on rational decision making. This period saw the wide expansion of capitalism, colonialism, democracy, and science-based rationalism. The Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the American and French Revolutions, and World War I are all significant events that took place during the modern era. One of the most significant, however, was the Industrial Revolution; its emphasis on routinization and efficiency helped society restructure itself along those terms as well.
- Postmodernity differed from modernity in its questioning of reason, rejection of grand narratives, and emphasis on subcultures. Rather than searching for one ultimate truth that could explain all of history, the postmodernists focused on contingency, context, and diversity.

? Exercise 6.3.1

Draw a Venn diagram of the two cultural periods discussed at length in this chapter. Make a list of the features, values, and events that mark each period. Is there any overlap? How do they differ?

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6.4: How Did We Get Here? The Evolution of Media

Learning Objectives

- Discuss events that impacted the adaptation of mass media.
- Explain how different technological transitions have shaped media industries.
- Identify four roles the media perform in our society.

"Well, how did I get here?" a baffled David Byrne sings in the Talking Heads song, "Once in a Lifetime." The contemporary media landscape is so rich, deep, and multifaceted that it's easy to imagine American media consumers asking themselves the same question. In 2010, Americans could turn on their television and find 24-hour news channels, as well as music videos, nature documentaries, and reality shows about everything from hoarders to fashion models. That's not to mention movies available on-demand from cable providers, or television and video available online for streaming or downloading. Half of American households receive a daily newspaper, and the average person holds 1.9 magazine subscriptions.Journalism.org, *The State of the News Media 2004*, http://www.stateofthemedia.org/2004/ (accessed July 15, 2010); Jim Bilton, "The Loyalty Challenge: How Magazine Subscriptions Work," *In Circulation*, January/February 2007. A University of California San Diego study claimed that U.S. households consumed around 3.6 zettabytes of information in 2008, the digital equivalent of a 7-foot high stack of books covering the entire United States, including Alaska—a 350 percent increase since 1980.Doug Ramsey, "UC San Diego Experts Calculate How Much Information Americans Consume." University of San Diego News Center, December 9, 2009. Americans are exposed to media in taxicabs and busses, in classrooms and doctors' offices, on highways and in airplanes.

Later chapters will offer in-depth explorations of how particular media developed in different eras. But we can begin to orient ourselves here by briefly examining a history of media in culture, looking at the ways technological innovations have helped to bring us to where we are today, and finally considering the varied roles the media fill in our culture today.

A Brief History of Mass Media and Culture

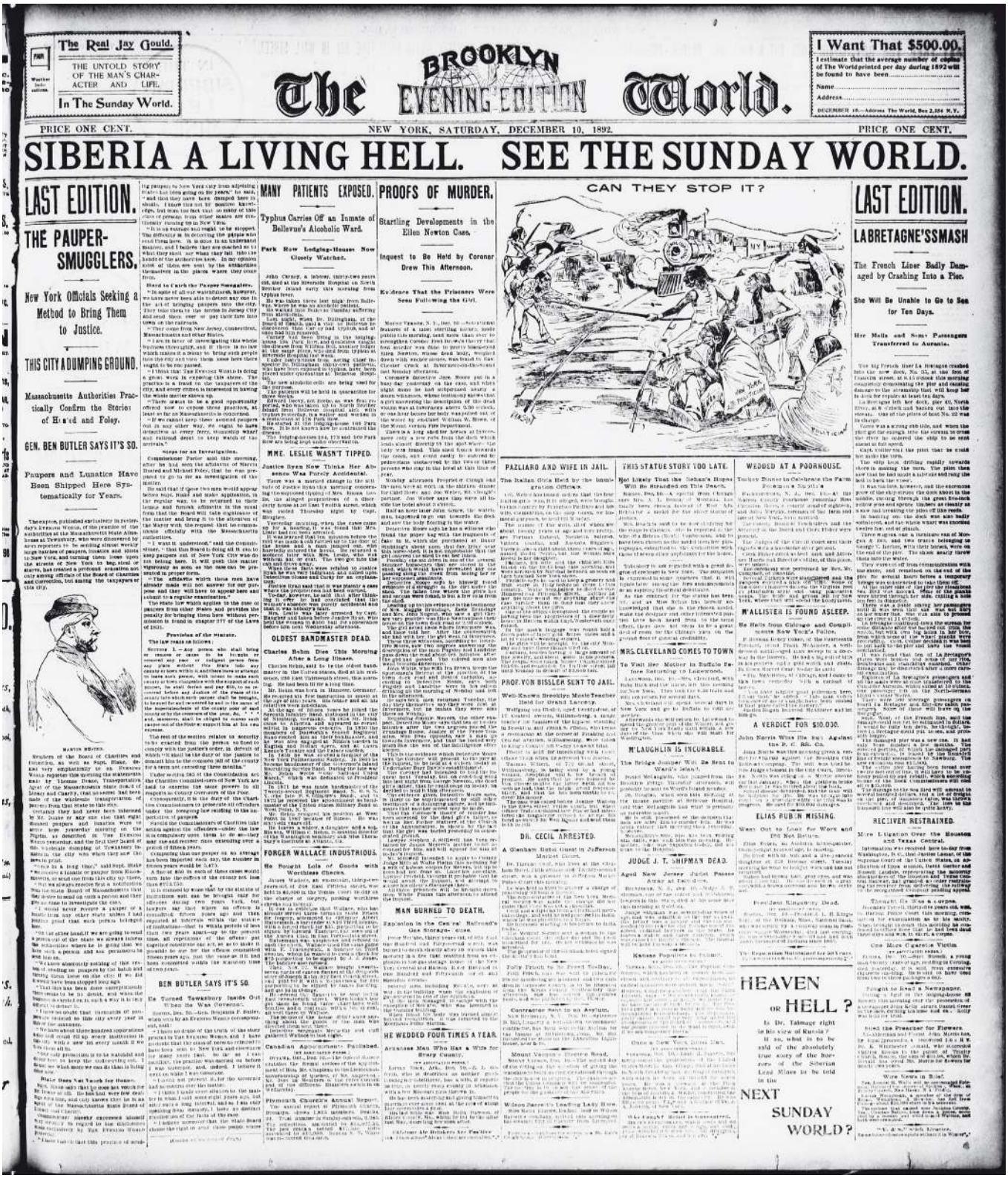
Until Johannes Gutenberg's 15th-century invention of the movable type printing press, books were painstakingly handwritten, and no two copies were exactly the same. The printing press made the mass production of print media possible. Not only was it much cheaper to produce written material, but new transportation technologies also made it easier for texts to reach a wide audience. It's hard to overstate the importance of Gutenberg's invention, which helped usher in massive cultural movements like the European Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. In 1810, another German printer, Friedrich Koenig, pushed media production even further when he essentially hooked the steam engine up to a printing press, enabling the industrialization of printed media. In 1800, a hand-operated printing press could produce about 480 pages per hour; Koenig's machine more than doubled this rate. (By the 1930s, many printing presses had an output of 3000 pages an hour.) This increased efficiency helped lead to the rise of the daily newspaper.

As the first Europeans settled the land that would come to be called the United States of America, the newspaper was an essential medium. At first, newspapers helped the Europeans stay connected with events back home. But as the people developed their own way of life—their own *culture*—newspapers helped give expression to that culture. Political scientist Benedict Anderson has argued that newspapers also helped forge a sense of national identity by treating readers across the country as part of one unified group with common goals and values. Newspapers, he said, helped create an "imagined community."

The United States continued to develop, and the newspaper was the perfect medium for the increasingly urbanized Americans of the 19th century, who could no longer get their local news merely through gossip and word of mouth. These Americans were living in an unfamiliar world, and newspapers and other publications helped them negotiate the rapidly changing world. The Industrial Revolution meant that people had more leisure time and more money, and media helped them figure out how to spend both.

In the 1830s, the major daily newspapers faced a new threat with the rise of the penny press—newspapers that were low-priced broadsheets. These papers served as a cheaper, more sensational daily news source and privileged news of murder and adventure over the dry political news of the day. While earlier newspapers catered to a wealthier, more educated audience, the penny press attempted to reach a wide swath of readers through cheap prices and entertaining (often scandalous) stories. The penny press can be seen as the forerunner to today's gossip-hungry tabloids.

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The Real Jay Gould.
THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE MAN'S CHARACTER AND LIFE.
In The Sunday World.

The BROOKLYN EVENING EDITION World.

I Want That $500.00.
I estimate that the average number of copies of The World printed per day during 1892 will be found to have been.....
Name.....
Address.....
DECEMBER 10.—Address The World, Box 2,584, N. Y.

PRICE ONE CENT. NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1892. PRICE ONE CENT.

SIBERIA A LIVING HELL. SEE THE SUNDAY WORLD.

LAST EDITION.

THE PAUPER-SMUGGLERS.

New York Officials Seeking a Method to Bring Them to Justice.

THIS CITY A DUMPING GROUND.

Massachusetts Authorities Practically Confirm the Stories of Heald and Foley.

GEN. BEN BUTLER SAYS IT'S SO.

Paupers and Lunatics Have Been Shipped Here Systematically for Years.

MANY PATIENTS EXPOSED.

Typhus Carries Off an Inmate of Bellevue's Alcoholic Ward.

Park Row Lodging-Houses Now Closely Watched.

PROOFS OF MURDER.

Startling Developments in the Ellen Newton Case.

Inquest to Be Held by Coroner Drew This Afternoon.

Evidence That the Prisoners Were Seen Following the Girl.

CAN THEY STOP IT?

LAST EDITION.

LABRETAGNE'S SMASH

The French Liner Badly Damaged by Crashing Into a Pier.

She Will Be Unable to Go to Sea for Ten Days.

PAZLIARO AND WIFE IN JAIL.

THIS STATUE STORY TOO LATE.

WEDDED AT A POORHOUSE.

MME. LESLIE WASN'T TIPPED.

OLDEST BANDMASTER DEAD.

FORGER WALLACE INDUSTRIOUS.

BEN BUTLER SAYS IT'S SO.

PROF. VON BISSLER SENT TO JAIL.

DR. CECIL ARRESTED.

MAN BURNED TO DEATH.

HE WEDDED FOUR TIMES A YEAR.

M'LAUGHLIN IS INCURABLE.

JUDGE J. T. SHIPMAN DEAD.

MRS. CLEVELAND COMES TO TOWN

M'ALLISTER IS FOUND ASLEEP.

He Hails from Chicago and Compliments Some New York Ladies.

A VERDICT FOR $10,000.

ELIAS RUBIN MISSING.

RECEIVER RESTRAINED.

HEAVEN OR HELL?

Is Dr. Talmage right in his view of Russia?

If so, what is to be said of the absolutely true story of the horrors of the Siberian Lead Mines to be told in the

NEXT SUNDAY WORLD?

Figure 1.3. *The penny press appealed to readers' desires for lurid tales of murder and scandal.*

In the early decades of the 20th century, the first major non-print forms of mass media—film and radio—exploded in popularity. Radios, which were less expensive than telephones and widely available by the 1920s, especially had the unprecedented ability of allowing huge numbers of people to listen to the same event at the same time. In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge's preelection speech reached more than 20 million people. Radio was a boon for advertisers, who now had access to a large and captive audience. An early advertising consultant claimed that the early days of radio were "a glorious opportunity for the advertising man

to spread his sales propaganda" thanks to "a countless audience, sympathetic, pleasure seeking, enthusiastic, curious, interested, approachable in the privacy of their homes."Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005).

The reach of radio also further helped forge an American culture. The medium was able to downplay regional differences and encourage a unified sense of the American lifestyle—a lifestyle that was increasingly driven and defined by consumer purchases. "Americans in the 1920s were the first to wear ready-made, exact-size clothing…to play electric phonographs, to use electric vacuum cleaners, to listen to commercial radio broadcasts, and to drink fresh orange juice year round."Digital History, "The Formation of Modern American Mass Culture," *The Jazz Age: The American 1920s*, 2007, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/dat...y.cfm?hhid=454(accessed July 15, 2010). This boom in consumerism put its stamp on the 1920s, and, ironically, helped contribute to the Great Depression of the 1930s.Library of Congress, "Radio: A Consumer Product and a Producer of Consumption," http://lcweb2.loc.gov:8081/ammem/amrlhtml/inradio.html (accessed July 15, 2010).

The post-World War II era in the United States was marked by prosperity, and by the introduction of a seductive new form of mass communication: television. In 1946, there were about 17,000 televisions in the entire United States. Within seven years, two-thirds of American households owned at least one set. As the United States' gross national product (GNP) doubled in the 1950s, and again in the 1960s, the American home became firmly ensconced as a consumer unit. Along with a television, the typical U.S. family owned a car and a house in the suburbs, all of which contributed to the nation's thriving consumer-based economy.

Broadcast television was the dominant form of mass media. There were just three major networks, and they controlled over 90 percent of the news programs, live events, and sitcoms viewed by Americans. On some nights, close to half the nation watched the same show! Some social critics argued that television was fostering a homogenous, conformist culture by reinforcing ideas about what "normal" American life looked like. But television also contributed to the counterculture of the 1960s. The Vietnam War was the nation's first televised military conflict, and nightly images of war footage and war protestors helped intensify the nation's internal conflicts.

Broadcast technology, including radio and television, had such a hold of the American imagination that newspapers and other print media found themselves having to adapt to the new media landscape. Print media was more durable and easily archived, and allowed users more flexibility in terms of time—once a person had purchased a magazine, he could read it whenever and wherever he'd like. Broadcast media, in contrast, usually aired programs on a fixed schedule, which allowed it to both provide a sense of immediacy but also impermanence—until the advent of digital video recorders in the 21st century, it was impossible to pause and rewind a television broadcast.

The media world faced drastic changes once again in the 1980s and 1990s with the spread of cable television. During the early decades of television, viewers had a limited number of channels from which to choose. In 1975, the three major networks accounted for 93 percent of all television viewing. By 2004, however, this share had dropped to 28.4 percent of total viewing, thanks to the spread of cable television. Cable providers allowed viewers a wide menu of choices, including channels specifically tailored to people who wanted to watch only golf, weather, classic films, sermons, or videos of sharks. Still, until the mid-1990s, television was dominated by the three large networks. The Telecommunications Act of 1996, an attempt to foster competition by deregulating the industry, actually resulted in many mergers and buyouts of small companies by large companies. The broadcast spectrum in many places was in the hands of a few large corporations. In 2003, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) loosened regulation even further, allowing a single company to own 45 percent of a single market (up from 25 percent in 1982).

Technological Transitions Shape Media Industries

New media technologies both spring from and cause cultural change. For this reason, it can be difficult to neatly sort the evolution of media into clear causes and effects. Did radio fuel the consumerist boom of the 1920s, or did the radio become wildly popular because it appealed to a society that was already exploring consumerist tendencies? Probably a little bit of both. Technological innovations such as the steam engine, electricity, wireless communication, and the Internet have all had lasting and significant effects on American culture. As media historians Asa Briggs and Peter Burke note, every crucial invention came with "a change in historical perspectives."Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). Electricity altered the way people thought about time, since work and play were no longer dependent on the daily rhythms of sunrise and sunset. Wireless communication collapsed distance. The Internet revolutionized the way we store and retrieve information.

The contemporary media age can trace its origins back to the electrical telegraph, patented in the United States by Samuel Morse in 1837. Thanks to the telegraph, communication was no longer linked to the physical transportation of messages. Suddenly, it didn't

matter whether a message needed to travel five or five hundred miles. Suddenly, information from distant places was nearly as accessible as local news. When the first transatlantic cable was laid in 1858, allowing near-instantaneous communication from the United States to Europe, *The London Times* described it as “the greatest discovery since that of Columbus, a vast enlargement… given to the sphere of human activity.”Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*(Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). Celebrations broke out in New York as people marveled at the new media. Telegraph lines began to stretch across the globe, making their own kind of world wide web.

Not long after the telegraph, wireless communication (which eventually led to the development of radio, television, and other broadcast media) emerged as an extension of telegraph technology. Although many 19th-century inventors, including Nikola Tesla, had a hand in early wireless experiments, it was Italian-born Guglielmo Marconi who is recognized as the developer of the first practical wireless radio system. This mysterious invention, where sounds seemed to magically travel through the air, captured the world’s imagination. Early radio was used for military communication, but soon the technology entered the home. The radio mania that swept the country inspired hundreds of applications for broadcasting licenses, some from newspapers and other news outlets, while other radio station operators included retail stores, schools, and even cities. In the 1920s, large media networks—including the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)—were launched, and they soon began to dominate the airwaves. In 1926, they owned 6.4 percent of U.S. broadcasting stations; by 1931, that number had risen to 30 percent.Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005).

The 19th-century development of photographic technologies would lead to the later innovations of cinema and television. As with wireless technology, several inventors independently came up with photography at the same time, among them the French inventors Joseph Niepce and Louis Daguerre, and British scientist William Henry Fox Talbot. In the United States, George Eastman developed the Kodak camera in 1888, banking on the hope that Americans would welcome an inexpensive, easy-to-use camera into their homes, as they had with the radio and telephone. Moving pictures were first seen around the turn of the century, with the first U.S. projection hall opening in Pittsburgh in 1905. By the 1920s, Hollywood had already created its first stars, most notably Charlie Chaplin. By the end of the 1930s, Americans were watching color films with full sound, including *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Television, which consists of an image being converted to electrical impulses, transmitted through wires or radio waves, and then reconverted into images, existed before World War II but really began to take off in the 1950s. In 1947, there were 178,000 television sets made in the United States; five years later, there were 15 million. Radio, cinema, and live theater all saw a decline in the face of this new medium that allowed viewers to be entertained with sound and moving pictures without having to leave their homes.

How was this powerful new medium going to be operated? After much debate, the United States opted for the market. Competing commercial stations (including the radio powerhouses of CBS and NBC) owned stations and sold advertising and commercial-driven programming dominated. Britain took another track with its government-managed British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Funding was driven by licensing fees instead of advertisements. In contrast to the American system, the BBC strictly regulated the length and character of commercials that could be aired. U.S. television, propelled by prosperity, advertising and increasingly powerful networks, flourished. By the beginning of 1955, there were 36 million television sets in the United States, and 4.8 million in all of Europe.Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). Important national events, broadcast live for the first time, were an impetus for consumers to buy sets and participate in the spectacle—both England and Japan saw a boom in sales before important royal weddings in the 1950s.



Figure 1.4. *In the 1960s, the concept of a useful portable computer was still a dream; huge mainframes were required to run a basic operating system.*

For the last stage in this fast history of media technology, how's this for a prediction? In 1969, management consultant Peter Drucker predicted that the next major technological innovation after television would be an "electronic appliance" that would be "capable of being plugged in wherever there is electricity and giving immediate access to all the information needed for school work from first grade through college." He said it would be the equivalent of Edison's light bulb in its ability to revolutionize how we live. He had, in effect, predicted the computer. He was prescient about the effect that computers and the Internet would have on education, social relationships, and the culture at large. The inventions of random access memory (RAM) chips and microprocessors in the 1970s were important steps along the way to the Internet age. As Briggs and Burke note, these advances meant that "hundreds of thousands of components could be carried on a microprocessor." The reduction of many different kinds of content to digitally stored information meant that "print, film, recording, radio and television and all forms of telecommunications [were] now being thought of increasingly as part of one complex." This process, also known as convergence, will be discussed in later chapters and is a force that's shaping the face of media today.

Why Media? What Do Media Do for Us?

Even a brief history of media can leave one breathless. The speed, reach, and power of the technology are humbling. The evolution can seem almost natural and inevitable, but it is important to stop and ask a basic question: Why? Why do media seem to play such an important role in our lives and our culture? With reflection, we can see that media fulfill several basic roles.

One obvious role is *entertainment*. Media can act as a springboard for our imaginations, a source of fantasy, and an outlet for escapism. In the 19th century, Victorian readers, disillusioned by the grimness of the Industrial Revolution, found themselves drawn into books that offered fantastic worlds of fairies and other unreal beings. In the first decade of the 21st century, American television viewers could relax at the end of a day by watching singers, both wonderful and terrible, compete to be idols or watch two football teams do battle. Media entertain and distract us in the midst of busy and hard lives.

Media can also provide *information* and *education*. Information can come in many forms, and often blurs the line with entertainment. Today, newspapers and news-oriented television and radio programs make available stories from across the globe, allowing readers or viewers in London to have access to voices and videos from Baghdad, Tokyo, or Buenos Aires. Books and magazines provide a more in-depth look at a wide range of subjects. Online encyclopedias have articles on topics from presidential nicknames to child prodigies to tongue-twisters in various languages. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has posted free lecture notes, exams, and audio and video recordings of classes on its OpenCourseWare website, allowing anyone with an Internet connection access to world-class professors.

Another useful aspect of media is its ability to act as a **public forum** for the discussion of important issues. In newspapers or other periodicals, letters to the editor allow readers to respond to journalists, or voice their opinions on the issues of the day. These letters have been an important part of U.S. newspapers even when the nation was a British colony, and they have served as a means of

public discourse ever since. Blogs, discussion boards, and online comments are modern forums. Indeed, the Internet can be seen as a fundamentally democratic medium that allows people who can get online the ability to put their voices out there—though whether anyone will hear is another question.

Media can also serve to *monitor government, business, and other institutions*. Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* exposed the miserable conditions in the turn-of-the-century meatpacking industry. In the early 1970s, *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncovered evidence of the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up, which eventually led to the resignation of then-president Richard Nixon. Online journalists today try to uphold the "watchdog" role of the media.

Thinking more deeply, we can recognize that certain media are better at certain roles. Media have characteristics that influence how we use them. While some forms of mass media are better suited to entertainment, others make more sense as a venue for spreading information. For example, in terms of print media, books are durable and able to contain lots of information, but are relatively slow and expensive to produce. In contrast, newspapers are comparatively cheaper and quicker to create, making them a better medium for the quick turnover of daily news. Television provides vastly more visual information than radio, and is more dynamic than a static printed page; it can also be used to broadcast live events to a nationwide audience, as in the annual State of the Union addresses given by the U.S. president. However, it is also a one-way medium—that is, it allows for very little direct person-to-person communication. In contrast, the Internet encourages public discussion of issues and allows nearly everyone who wants a voice to have one. However, the Internet is also largely unmoderated and uncurated. Users may have to wade through thousands of inane comments or misinformed amateur opinions in order to find quality information.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the 1960s media theorist Marshall McLuhan took these ideas one step further, with the phrase **"the medium is the message."** McLuhan emphasized that each medium delivers information in a different way and that content is fundamentally shaped by that medium. For example, although television news has the advantage of offering video and live coverage, making a story come vividly alive, it is also a faster-paced medium. That means stories get reported in different ways than print. A story told on television will often be more visual, have less information, and be able to offer less history and context than the same story covered in a monthly magazine. This feature of media technology leads to interesting arguments. For example, some people claim that television presents "dumbed down" information. Others disagree. In an essay about television's effects on contemporary fiction, writer David Foster Wallace scoffed at the "reactionaries who regard TV as some malignancy visited on an innocent populace, sapping IQs and compromising SAT scores while we all sit there on ever fatter bottoms with little mesmerized spirals revolving in our eyes…Treating television as evil is just as reductive and silly as treating it like a toaster with pictures."David Foster Wallace, *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* (New York: Little Brown, 1997).

We do not have to cast value judgments but can affirm: People who get the majority of their news from a particular medium will have a particular view of the world shaped not just by the *content* of what they watch but also by its *medium*. Or, as computer scientist Alan Kay put it, "Each medium has a special way of representing ideas that emphasize particular ways of thinking and de-emphasize others."Alan Kay, "The Infobahn is Not the Answer," *Wired*, May 1994. The Internet has made this discussion even richer because it seems to hold all other media within it—print, radio, film, television and more. If indeed the medium is the message, the Internet provides us with an extremely interesting message to consider.

- Gutenberg's invention of the printing press enabled the mass production of media, which was then industrialized by Friedrich Koenig in the early 1800s. These innovations enabled the daily newspaper, which united the urbanized, industrialized populations of the 19th century.
- In the 20th century, radio allowed advertisers to reach a mass audience and helped spur the consumerism of the 1920s—and the Great Depression of the 1930s. After World War II, television boomed in the United States and abroad, though its concentration in the hands of three major networks led to accusations of conformity. The spread of cable and subsequent deregulation in the 1980s and 1990s led to more channels, but not necessarily more diverse ownership.
- Technological transitions have also had great effect on the media industry, although it is difficult to say whether technology caused a cultural shift or rather resulted from it. The ability to make technology small and affordable enough to fit into the home is an important aspect of the popularization of new technologies.
- Media fulfill several roles in culture, including the following:
    - Entertaining and providing an outlet for the imagination
    - Educating and informing
    - Serving as a public forum for the discussion of important issues
    - Acting as a watchdog for government, business, and other institutions

Exercise 6.4.1

Choose two different types of mass communication—radio shows, television broadcasts, Internet sites, newspaper advertisements, and so on from two different kinds of media. Make a list of what role(s) each one fills, keeping in mind that much of what we see, hear, or read in the mass media has more than one aspect. Consider the following questions: Does the type of media suit the social role? Why did the creators of this particular message present it in the particular way, and in this particular medium?

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6.5: Media Mix - Convergence

Learning Objectives

- Define convergence and discuss examples of it in contemporary life.
- Name the five types of convergence identified by Henry Jenkins.
- Examine how convergence is affecting culture and society.

Each cultural era is marked by changes in technology. What happens to the "old" technology? When radio was invented, people predicted the end of newspapers. When television was invented, people predicted the end of radio and film. It's important to keep in mind that the implementation of new technologies does not mean that the old ones simply vanish into dusty museums. Today's media consumers still read newspapers, listen to radio, watch television, and get immersed in movies. The difference is that it's now possible to do all those things and do all those things through one device—be it a personal computer or a smartphone—and through the medium of the Internet. Such actions are enabled by media convergence, the process by which previously distinct technologies come to share content, tasks and resources. A cell phone that also takes pictures and video is an example of the convergence of digital photography, digital video, and cellular telephone technologies. A news story that originally appeared in a newspaper and now is published on a website or pushed on a mobile phone is another example of convergence.

Kinds of Convergence

Convergence isn't just limited to technology. Media theorist Henry Jenkins has devoted a lot of time to thinking about convergence. He argues that convergence isn't an end result but instead *a process* that changes how media is both consumed and produced. Jenkins breaks convergence down into five categories:

1. *Economic convergence* is the horizontal and vertical integration of the entertainment industry, in which a single company has interests across and within many kinds of media. For example, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation owns numerous newspapers (*The New York Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*) but is also involved in book publishing (HarperCollins), sports (the Colorado Rockies), broadcast television (Fox), cable television (FX, National Geographic Channel), film (20th Century Fox), Internet (Facebook), and many others.
2. *Organic convergence* is what happens when someone is watching television while chatting online and also listening to music—such multitasking seems like a natural outcome in a diverse media world.
3. *Cultural convergence* has several different aspects. One important component is stories flowing across several kinds of media platforms—for example, novels that become television series (*Dexter* or *Friday Night Lights*); radio dramas that become comic strips (*The Shadow*); even amusement park rides that become film franchises (*Pirates of the Caribbean*). The character Harry Potter exists in books, films, toys, amusement park rides, and candy bars. Another aspect of cultural convergence is participatory culture—that is, the way media consumers are able to annotate, comment on, remix, and otherwise talk back to culture in unprecedented ways.



Figure 1.5. Nigeria's Nollywood produces more films annually than any other country besides India.

4. *Global convergence* is the process of geographically distant cultures influencing one another despite the oceans and mountains that may physically separate them. Nigeria's "Nollywood" cinema takes its cues from India's Bollywood, which of course stemmed from Hollywood; old *Tom and Jerry* cartoons and newer Oprah shows are popular on Arab satellite television channels; successful American horror movies like *The Ring* and *The Grudge* are remakes of Japanese hits; the hit television show, "American Idol" was a remake of a British show. The advantage of global convergence is worldwide access to a wealth of cultural influence. Its downside, some critics posit, is the threat of cultural imperialism, defined by Herbert Schiller as the way that developing countries are "attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system." That is, less powerful nations lose their cultural traditions as more powerful nations spread their culture through their media and other forms. Cultural imperialism can be a formal policy or can happen more subtly, as with the spread of outside influence through television, movies, and other cultural projects.
5. *Technological convergence* is the merging of technologies. When more and more different kinds of media are transformed into digital content, as Jenkins notes, "we expand the potential relationships between them and enable them to flow across platforms."Henry Jenkins, "Convergence? I Diverge," *Technology Review*, June 2001, p. 93.

Effects of Convergence

Jenkins' concept of "organic convergence"—particularly, multitasking—is perhaps most evident in your own lives. To many who grew up in a world dominated by so-called old media, there is nothing organic about today's mediated world. As a *New York Times* editorial sniffed, "Few objects on the planet are farther removed from nature—less, say, like a rock or an insect—than a glass and stainless steel smartphone."Editorial, "The Half-Life of Phones," *The New York Times*, Week in Review section, June 18, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/opinion/20sun4.html?_r=1 (accessed July 15, 2010). But modern American culture is plugged

in as never before, and many students today have never known a world where the Internet didn't exist. Such a cultural sea change causes a significant generation gap between those who grew up with new media and those who didn't.

A 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that Americans aged 8 to 18 spend more than 7.5 hours with electronic devices each day—and, thanks to multitasking, they're able to pack an average of 11 hours of media content into that 7.5 hours.Tamar Lewin, "If Your Kids Are Awake, They're Probably Online," *The New York Times*, Education section, January 20, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/education/20wired.html (accessed July 15, 2010). These statistics highlight some of the aspects of the new digital model of media consumption: participation and multitasking. Today's teenagers aren't passively sitting in front of screens, quietly absorbing information. Instead, they are sending text messages to friends, linking news articles on Facebook, commenting on YouTube videos, writing reviews of television episodes to post online, and generally engaging with the culture they consume. Convergence has also made multitasking much easier, as many devices allow users to surf the Internet, listen to music, watch videos, play games, and reply to emails and texts on the same machine.

However, this multitasking is still quite new and we do not know how media convergence and immersion are shaping culture, people, and individual brains. In his 2005 book *Everything Bad Is Good for You*, Steven Johnson argues that today's television and video games are mentally stimulating, in that they pose a cognitive challenge and invite active engagement and problem-solving. Poking fun at alarmists who see every new technology as making children more stupid, Johnson jokingly cautions readers against the dangers of book reading: it "chronically understimulates the senses" and is "tragically isolating." Even worse, books "follow a fixed linear path. You can't control their narratives in any fashion—you simply sit back and have the story dictated to you.…This risks instilling a general passivity in our children, making them feel as though they're powerless to change their circumstances. Reading is not an active, participatory process; it's a submissive one."Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad Is Good for You* (Riverhead, NY: Riverhead Books, 2005).

A 2010 book by Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* is more pessimistic. Carr worries that the vast array of interlinked information available through the Internet is eroding attention spans and making contemporary minds distracted and less capable of deep, thoughtful engagement with complex ideas and arguments. He mourns the change in his own reading habits. "Once I was a scuba diver in a sea of words," Carr reflects ruefully. "Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski." Carr cites neuroscience studies showing that when people try to do two things at once, they give less attention to each and perform the tasks less carefully. In other words, multitasking makes us do a greater number of things poorly. Whatever the ultimate cognitive, social, or technological results, though, convergence is changing the way we relate to media today.

Video Killed the Radio Star: Convergence Kills Off Obsolete Technology—Or Does It?

When was the last time you used a rotary phone? How about a payphone on a street? Or a library's card catalog? When you need brief, factual information, when was the last time you reached for a handy volume of *Encyclopedia Britannica*? Odds are, it's been a while. Maybe never. All of these habits, formerly common parts of daily life, have been rendered essentially obsolete through the progression of convergence.

But convergence hasn't erased old technologies; instead, it may have just altered the way we use them. Take cassette tapes and Polaroid film, for example. The underground music tastemaker Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth recently claimed that he only listens to music on cassette. Polaroid Corporation, creators of the once-popular instant film cameras, was driven out of business by digital photography in 2008, only to be revived two years later—with pop star Lady Gaga as the brand's creative director. Several iPhone apps promise to apply effects to photos to make them look more like Polaroids.

Cassettes, Polaroids, and other seemingly obsolete technologies have been able to thrive—albeit in niche markets—both despite and because of Internet culture. Instead of being slick and digitized, cassette tapes and Polaroid photos are physical objects that are made more accessible and more human, according to enthusiasts, *because of* their flaws. "I think there's a group of people—fans and artists alike—out there to whom music is more than just a file on your computer, more than just a folder of mp3s," says Brad Rose, founder of a Tulsa-based cassette label. The distinctive Polaroid look—caused by uneven color saturation, under- or over-development, or just daily atmospheric effects on the developing photograph—is emphatically analog. In an age of high resolution, portable printers, and camera phones, the Polaroid's appeal has something to do with ideas of nostalgia and authenticity. Convergence has transformed who uses these media and for what purposes, but it hasn't run them out of town yet.

Key Takeaways

- Twenty-first century media culture is increasingly marked by convergence, or the coming together of previously distinct technologies, as in a cell phone that also allows users to take video and check email.
- Media theorist Henry Jenkins identifies the five kinds of convergence as the following:
    1. Economic convergence, when a single company has interests across many kinds of media.
    2. Organic convergence is multimedia multitasking, or the "natural" outcome of a diverse media world.
    3. Cultural convergence, when stories flow across several kinds of media platforms, and when readers or viewers can comment on, alter, or otherwise talk back to culture.
    4. Global convergence, when geographically distant cultures are able to influence one another.
    5. Technological convergence, in which different kinds of technology merge. The most extreme example of technological convergence would be the as-yet hypothetical "black box," one machine that controlled every media function.
- The jury is still out on how these different types of convergence will affect people on an individual and cultural level. Some theorists believe that convergence and new media technologies make people smarter by requiring them to make decisions and interact with the media they're consuming; others fear that the digital age is giving us access to more information but leaving us shallower.

? Exercise 6.5.1

Which argument do you find more compelling, Johnson's or Carr's? Make a list of points, examples, and facts that back up the theory that you think best explains the effects of convergence. Alternatively, come up with your own theory of how convergence is changing individual and society as a whole. Stage a mock debate with a member of the class who holds a view different from your own.

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6.6: Cultural Values Shape Media; Media Shape Cultural Values

Learning Objectives

- Name and discuss two limitations on free speech that are based on cultural values.
- Identify examples of propaganda in mass media.
- Define gatekeeper, and explain the role of the gatekeeper in mass media.

In a 1995 *Wired* magazine article, Jon Katz suggested that the Revolutionary War patriot Thomas Paine should be held up as "the moral father of the Internet." The Internet, Katz wrote, "offers what Paine and his revolutionary colleagues hoped for—a vast, diverse, passionate, global means of transmitting ideas and opening minds." In fact, according to Katz, the emerging Internet era is closer in spirit to the 18th-century media world than the 20th-century's so-called old media (radio, television, print). "The ferociously spirited press of the late 1700s…was dominated by individuals expressing their opinions. The idea that ordinary citizens with no special resources, expertise, or political power—like Paine himself—could sound off, reach wide audiences, even spark revolutions, was brand-new to the world."Jon Katz, "The Age of Paine," *Wired*, May 1995, http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/3.05/paine.html (accessed July 15, 2010).

As we continue our introduction to understanding media and culture, Katz's impassioned defense of Paine's plucky independence reminds us of how cultural values shape media. Paine's values led to his books and pamphlets that helped lead to a new nation. In all eras, cultural values shape the way media are created, used, and controlled. Keeping Katz's words in mind, we can ask ourselves further questions about the role of cultural values in our media today. How do cultural values shape our media and mass communication? And how, in turn, do media and mass communication shape our values? We'll start with a key American cultural value: free speech.

Free Speech as Cultural Value

The value of free speech is central to American mass communication, and has been since the nation's revolutionary founding. The U.S. Constitution's very first amendment guarantees the freedom of speech and of the press. Thanks to the First Amendment and subsequent statutes, the United States has some of the broadest protections on speech of any industrialized nation. We can see the value that American culture places on free speech. However, speech and the press are not always free—cultural values have placed limits and those limits, like values, have shifted over time.

Obscenity, for example, has not often been tolerated. Indeed, the very definition of obscenity has shifted over time with the nation's changing social attitudes. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, ranked by the Modern Library as the best English-language novel of the 20th century, was illegal to publish in the United States between 1922 and 1934. The 1954 Supreme Court case, *Roth v. The United States*, tried to lessen restrictions and defined obscenity more narrowly. It allowed for differences depending on "community standards." Obscenity became even more of an issue during the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Cultural changes of that era made it even more difficult to pin down just what was obscene and what was meant by "community standards." Today, obscenity continues its tug-of-war with cultural values. Sexually explicit magazines, such as *Playboy*, are available in nearly every U.S. airport, but pornography on the Internet is still a subject of concern.



Figure 1.6 Artist Shepard Fairey, creator of the iconic Obama HOPE image, was sued by the Associated Press for copyright infringement; Fairey argued that his work was protected by the fair use exception.

Copyright law also puts limits on free speech. Here we see a conflict between cultural values of free speech and the right to protect your creative rights. Intellectual property law was originally intended to protect just that—the proprietary rights, both economic and intellectual, of the originator of a creative work. Works under copyright can't be reproduced without the authorization of the creator, nor can anyone else use them to make a profit. Inventions, novels, musical tunes, and even phrases can all be covered by copyright law. The first copyright statute in the United States set 14 years as the maximum term for copyright protection. This number has risen exponentially in the 20th century; some works are now copyright protected for up to 120 years. In recent years, an Internet culture that enables file sharing, mixing, mash-ups, and YouTube parodies has raised questions about copyright. Can you refer to a copyrighted work? What is *fair use* of a copyrighted work? The exact line between what expressions are protected or prohibited by law are still being set by courts; and as the changing values of the U.S. public evolve, copyright law—like obscenity law—will continue to change as well.

Persuasion and Cultural Values

Cultural values also shape mass media messages when producers of media content have vested interests in particular social goals. The producers offer media content that promotes or refutes particular viewpoints. Governments, corporations, nonprofits, colleges, indeed most organizations, all try to shape media content to promote themselves and their values. In its most heavy-handed form, at the level of government, this type of media influence can become propaganda, communication that intentionally attempts to persuade its audience for ideological, political, or commercial purposes. Propaganda often (but not always) distorts the truth, selectively presents facts, or uses emotional appeals. In war time, propaganda often includes caricatures of the enemy.

During World War I, for example, the U.S. government created the Creel Commission to act as a sort of public relations agency for the American entry into the war. The commission used radio, movies, posters, and in-person speakers to present a positive slant on the American war effort and demonize the opposing Germans. George Creel, chairman of the commission, acknowledged the committee's attempt at influencing the public, but he shied away from calling its work propaganda:

In no degree was the committee an agency of censorship, a machinery of concealment or repression.…In all things, from first to last, without halt or change, it was a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world's greatest adventures in advertising…We did not call it propaganda, for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption. Our effort was educational and informative throughout, for we had such confidence in our case as to feel that no other

argument was needed than the simple, straightforward presentation of the facts.George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920).



Figure 1.7 World War I propaganda posters were sometimes styled to resemble movie posters in an attempt to glamorize the war effort.

Of course, the line between the selective (but "straightforward") presentation of the truth and the manipulation of propaganda is not an obvious or distinct one. (Another of the commission's members was later deemed "the father of public relations" and authored a book titled *Propaganda*.) Advertisers craft messages so viewers want to buy their products. Some news sources, such as cable news channels or political blogs, have an explicit political slant. For our purposes, we simply want to keep in mind how cultural values shape much media content.

The Cultural Value of Gatekeepers

In 1960, journalist A. J. Liebling wryly observed that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." Although he may not have put it in those terms, Liebling was talking about the role of gatekeepers in the media industry, another way in which cultural values influence mass communication. Gatekeepers are the people who help determine which stories make it to the public, including reporters who decide what sources to use, and editors who pick what gets published and which stories make it to the front page. Media gatekeepers are part of culture and thus have their own cultural values, whether consciously or unconsciously. In deciding what counts as newsworthy, entertaining, or relevant, gatekeepers use their own values to create and shape what gets presented to the wider public. Conversely, gatekeepers may decide that some events are unimportant or uninteresting to consumers. Those events may never reach the eyes or ears of a larger public.

In one striking example of how cultural values shape gatekeeping, journalist Allan Thompson points to the news media's sluggishness in covering the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Almost one million people were killed in ferocious attacks in just 100 days. Yet, as Thompson notes, few foreign correspondents were in Africa, and the world was slow to learn of the atrocities in Rwanda. Instead, the nightly news was preoccupied by the O. J. Simpson murder trial, Tonya Harding's attack on a fellow figure skater, or the less-bloody conflict in Bosnia (a European country, where more reporters were stationed). Thompson argues that the lack of international media attention allowed politicians to remain complacent. With little media coverage, there was little outrage about the Rwandan atrocities, which contributed to a lack of political will to invest time and troops in a faraway conflict. Richard Dowden, Africa Editor for the British newspaper *The Independent* during the Rwandan genocide, bluntly explained the news media's larger reluctance to focus on African issues: "Africa was simply not important. It didn't sell newspapers. Newspapers have to make profits. So it wasn't important. Cultural values by gatekeepers on the individual and institutional level downplayed the genocide at a time of great crisis, and potentially contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people."POLISMedia, "The

Media and the Rwanda Genocide," Lecture Delivered at The Crisis States Research Centre and POLIS at the London School of Economics, January 17, 2007, http://www.polismedia.org/rwandatranscript.aspx (accessed July 15, 2010).

Gatekeepers had an especially strong influence in old media, in which space and time were limited. A news broadcast could only last for its allotted half hour, 22 minutes with commercials, while a newspaper had a set number of pages to print. The Internet, in contrast, has room for infinite news reports. The interactive nature of the medium also minimizes the gatekeeper function of the media by allowing media consumers to have a voice as well. News aggregators like Digg.com allow readers to decide what makes it on to the front page. That is not to say that the wisdom or cultural values of the crowd is always wise—recent top stories on Digg have featured headlines like "Top 5 Hot Girls Playing Video Games" and "The girl who must eat every 15 minutes to stay alive." Media expert Mark Glaser noted that the digital age hasn't eliminated gatekeepers; it's just shifted who they are: "the editors who pick featured artists and apps at the Apple iTunes store, who choose videos to spotlight on YouTube, and who highlight Suggested Users on Twitter," among others. And unlike traditional media, these new gatekeepers rarely have public bylines, making it difficult to figure out who makes such decisions and on what basis.Mark Glaser, "New Gatekeepers Twitter, Apple, YouTube Need Transparent Editorial Picks," *PBS Mediashift*, March 26 2009.

Observing how distinct cultures and subcultures present the same story can be indicative of those cultures' various cultural values. Another way to look critically at today's media messages is to examine how the media has functioned in the world and in the United States during different cultural periods.

- American culture puts a high value on free speech; however, other cultural values sometimes take precedence. Shifting ideas about what constitutes obscenity, a kind of speech that is not legally protected by the First Amendment, is a good example of how cultural values impact mass communication—and of how those values change over time. Copyright law, another restriction put on free speech, has had a similar evolution over the nation's history.
- Propaganda is a message that attempts to persuade its audience for ideological, political, or social purposes. Some propaganda is obvious, explicit, and manipulative; however, advertising and public relations also are persuasive strategies that try to influence audiences.
- Gatekeepers influence culture by deciding what stories are considered newsworthy. Gatekeepers can promote cultural values either consciously or unconsciously. The digital age has lessened the power of gatekeepers somewhat, as the Internet allows for nearly unlimited space to cover any number of events and stories.

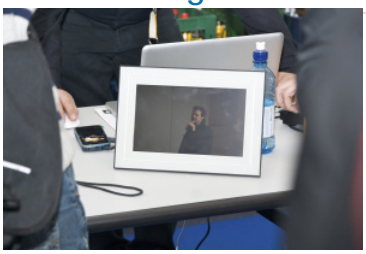
? Exercise 6.6.1

1. Find an advertisement—either in print, broadcast, or online—that you have recently found to be memorable. Now find a non-advertisement media message. Compare and contrast the ways that the ad and the non-ad express cultural values. Are the cultural values the same for each of them? Is the influence overt or covert? Why did the message's creators choose to present their message in this way?
2. Go to a popular website that uses user-uploaded content (YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Metafilter, etc.). Look at the content on the site's homepage. Can you tell how this particular content was selected to be featured? Does the website list a policy for featured content? What factors do you think go into the selection process?

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6.7: Framing



by Walljet (cc)

Framing occurs when the construction and dissemination of messages acts to highlight, emphasize or obscure some aspects of the message over others. We can do this through language via how we organize and structure information, choose signs out of a polysemic group that have overlapping denotic meaning and even appeals to wider context, and the intertext of prior experience which combines to help guide the recipient towards a particular dominant reading. Framing's relationship to intertext and context is particularly important to underline, as framing is best seen as a cumulative process, or one in which continued exposure to a certain frame helps to guide and internalize that frame's intended recipient response. It is often argued that framing is one of the central, if implicit, tools we bring to bear to understand complex and diverse experiences – by framing together experiences or texts that seem similar, we mentally simplify and reduce complexity and can then make decisions about what and how to engage with texts.

Both when talking specifically about frames or about language more generally, it is important to highlight that by language we don't just mean formal spoken or written language. Any coherent symbolic system can be taken as a linguistic system. Under this broad definition one of our earlier examples, street signs and lights, collectively form a linguistic system.

Because we are exposed to consistent language systems and the frames that encompass them repeatedly, language systems and frames become landmarks, part of our day-to-day system of cues and markers that help guide us to solve problems and come to conclusions as members of a culture.

But how do frames actually work within a cultural and communicative context? Firstly, we can break framing approaches down into two broad categories, episodic and thematic framing. Just as their names suggest, episodic framing is where an issue is approached in terms of a specific event or episode. Episodic frames often position individuals in the narrative as free of any constraint or influence of society – as such, individual actions are not usually considered in terms of wider discourses or institutions.

In contrast, thematic framing approaches an issue as part of a continuing topic or theme, rooted within wide social trends or functions. Episodic and thematic frames have different approaches to an issue and can have a dramatic impact on how that issue is subsequently read and understood. Interestingly, it is argued that news media in particular tends to favour episodic over thematic frames because episodic framing better suits the constraints of broadcast and print journalism (such as a 90 second slot or 200 word articles). However, the emphasis on episodic framing means that news as a whole tends not to encourage a reading of issues that takes into account broader themes, issues, or undercurrents. These might otherwise build collectively into a more textured understanding of an issue. This is a major critique of current news systems.

A great example of this is this interview with Maori commentator Willie Jackson where he tries to position the Tuhoe leaders as "good guys" and does so using an interesting set of language and framing techniques. He positions the accused as 'not bin Ladin' types, evoking current global stereotypes about what a "terrorist" is, and instead tries to reframe it as part of a wider conversation about institutional racism — both thematic framing (and reframing) approaches.



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Consider that interview (filmed for Maori tv) with this interview from 3News NZ, which isolates another of the accused, Marama Mayrick, but this time takes an episodic frame, positioning the subject, Mayrick, simply as an artist, 'caught up' in an event that floats in the news narrative without reference to wider contexts or issues (such as terrorism or racism).



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Discussion

1. Identify examples of both episodic and Thematic framing in some news or general documentary media sources.
2. After examining these ask, why would they be presented in the respective manners? Is it because of something inherent in the story or does it satisfy the media presenter's agenda? Or indeed, can you argue any other reason for the presenting style?

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6.8: Mass Media and Popular Culture

Learning Objectives

- Define tastemakers, and give examples of their influence in traditional media.
- Examine the ways the digital age is undermining the traditional role of tastemakers.
- Analyze how Internet culture now allows creators to bypass gatekeepers, and discuss the potential effects of this.

In 1850, an epidemic swept America—but instead of leaving victims sick with fever or flu, this was a rabid craze for the music of Swedish soprano Jenny Lind. American showman P. T. Barnum (who would later go on to found the circus we now know as Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus), a shrewd marketer and self-made millionaire, is credited with spreading "Lindomania" through a series of astute show-business moves. Barnum promised Lind an unprecedented thousand-dollar-a-night fee (the equivalent of close to $30,000 in today's dollars) for her entire 93-performance tour of the United States. Ever the savvy self-promoter, Barnum turned this huge investment to his advantage, using it to drum up publicity—and it paid off. When the Swedish soprano's ship docked on U.S. shores, she was greeted by 40,000 ardent fans; another 20,000 swarmed her hotel. Congress was adjourned during Lind's visit to Washington, DC, where the National Theater had to be enlarged in order to accommodate her audiences. A town in California and an island in Canada were named in her honor. Enthusiasts could purchase Jenny Lind hats, chairs, boots, opera glasses, and even pianos.



Figure 1.8 Source: Used with permission from Getty Images.

A little more than a century later, a new craze transformed American teenagers into screaming, fainting Beatle-maniacs. When the British foursome touched down at Kennedy Airport in 1964, they were met by more than 3,000 frenzied fans. Their performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* was seen by 73 million people, or 40 percent of the U.S. population. The crime rate that night dropped to its lowest level in 50 years. Beatlemania was at such a fever pitch that *Life* magazine cautioned that "A Beatle who ventures out unguarded into the streets runs the very real peril of being dismembered or crushed to death by his fans."Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, "Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun," In *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1992). The BBC helpfully pointed out that there was plenty of paraphrenalia for true fans to spend their money on: "T-shirts, sweat shirts, turtle-neck sweaters, tight-legged trousers, night shirts, scarves, and jewellery inspired by the Beatles" were all available, as were Beatles-style moptop wigs.

In the 21st century, rabid fans could actually help decide the next pop stars through the reality television program *American Idol*. Derived from a British show, *American Idol* hit the airwaves in 2002 and became the only television program ever to earn the top spot in the Neilsen ratings for six seasons in a row, often averaging more than 30 million nightly viewers. Rival television networks quaked in fear, deeming the pop behemoth "the ultimate schoolyard bully," "the Death Star," or even "the most impactful show in the history of television."Bill Carter, "For Fox's Rivals, 'American Idol' Remains a 'Schoolyard Bully,'" *The New York Times*, February 20, 2007, Arts Section. Newspapers put developments on the show on their front pages. New cell phone technologies

allowed viewers to have a direct role in the program's star-making enterprise through casting votes. Fans also could sign up for text alerts or play trivia games on their phones. In 2009, AT&T estimated that *Idol*-related text traffic amounted to 178 million messages.

An important consideration in any discussion of media and culture is the concept of *popular culture*. If culture is the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of a social group, organization, or institution, then what is popular culture? Popular culture is the media, products, and attitudes considered to be part of the mainstream of a given culture and the everyday life of common people. It is often distinct from more formal conceptions of culture that take into account moral, social, religious beliefs and values, such as our earlier definition of culture. It is also distinct from what some consider elite or high culture. For some people, *American Idol* is pop culture and opera is culture.

Pop culture and American media are inextricably linked—it's no coincidence that Jenny Lind, the Beatles, and *American Idol* were each promoted using a then-new technology—photography for Lind; television for the Beatles; the Internet and text messaging for *American Idol*. For as long as mass media have existed in the United States, they have helped to create and fuel mass crazes, skyrocketing celebrities, and pop culture manias of all kinds. Whether through newspaper advertisements, live television broadcasts, or integrated Internet marketing, media industry "tastemakers" help to shape what we care about. Even in our era of seemingly limitless entertainment options, mass hits like *American Idol* still have the ability to dominate the public's attention.

"The Tastemakers"

Historically, popular culture has been closely associated with mass media that introduce and encourage the adoption of certain trends. We can see these media as "tastemakers"—people or institutions that shape the way others think, eat, listen, drink, dress and more. Similar in some ways to the media gatekeepers discussed above, tastemakers can have huge influence. For example, *The New York Times'* restaurant and theater reviews used to be able to make or break a restaurant or show with their opinions. Another example is Ed Sullivan's variety show, which ran from 1948 to 1971, and is most famous for hosting the first U.S. appearance of the Beatles—a television event that was at the time the most-watched television program ever. Sullivan hosted musical acts, comedians, actors, and dancers, and had the reputation of being able to turn an unknown performer into a full-fledged star. Comedian Jackie Mason compared being on *The Ed Sullivan Show* to "an opera singer being at the Met. Or if a guy is an architect that makes the Empire State Building.…This was the biggest."John Leonard, "The Ed Sullivan Age," *American Heritage*, May/June, 1997. Sullivan was a classic example of an influential tastemaker of his time. *American Idol*'s Simon Cowell had similar influence as his show helped turn unknown local performers into international stars. Television hosts and comics Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert can be understood as tastemakers of progressive national politics.



Figure 1.9 Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert at Comedy Central's "Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear".

Source: Photo by Jeff Snyder/PictureGroup via AP Images

Along with encouraging a mass audience to keep an eye out for (or skip) certain movies, television shows, video games, books, or fashion trends, tastemaking is also used to create demand for new products. Companies often turn to advertising firms to help

create a public hunger for an object that may have not even existed six months previously. In the 1880s, when George Eastman developed the Kodak camera for personal use, photography was the realm of professionals. Ordinary people simply did not think about taking photographs. “Though the Kodak was relatively cheap and easy to use, most Americans didn’t see the need for a camera; they had no sense that there was any value in visually documenting their lives,” noted *New Yorker* writer James Surowiecki.James Surowiecki, “The Tastemakers,” *The New Yorker*, January 13, 2003. George Eastman’s advertising introduced the very idea of photography to everyday Americans. Kodak became a wildly successful company not because Eastman was good at selling cameras, but because he understood that what he really had to sell was photography.

Tastemakers can help keep culture vital by introducing the public to new ideas, music, programs, or products. But the ability to sway or influence the tastes of consumers can be worth millions of dollars. In the traditional media model, media companies set aside large advertising budgets to promote their most promising projects. Tastemakers are encouraged to buzz about “the next big thing.” In untraditional models, bribery and backroom deals also have helped promote performers or projects. For example, the Payola Scandal of the 1950s involved record companies paying the disc jockeys of radio stations to play certain records so those records would become hits. *Payola* is a combination of the words “pay” and “Victrola,” a record player. Companies today sometimes pay bloggers to promote their products.

A Changing System for the Internet Age

In retrospect, the 20th century was a tastemaker’s dream. Media choices were limited. Many cities and towns had just three television channels, one or two newspapers, and one or two dominant radio stations. Advertisers, critics, and other cultural influencers had access to huge audiences through a small number of mass communication platforms. However, by the end of the century, the rise of cable television and the Internet had begun to make tastemaking a much more complicated enterprise. While *The Ed Sullivan Show* regularly reached 50 million people in the 1960s, the most popular television series of 2009—*American Idol*—averaged around 25.5 million viewers per night, despite the fact that the 21st century United States could claim more people and more television sets than ever before. The proliferation of television channels and other, competing forms of entertainment meant that no one program or channel could dominate the attention of the American public as in Sullivan’s day.

Table 1.1 Viewings of Popular Television Broadcasts

Show/Episode	Number of Viewers	Percentage of Households	Year
The Ed Sullivan Show, Beatles’ first appearance	73 million	45.1	1964
The Ed Sullivan Show, Elvis’s first appearance	60 million	82.6	1956
I Love Lucy, “Lucy Goes to the Hospital”	44 million	71.7	1953
*M*A*S*H* series finale	106 million	60.2	1983
Seinfeld series finale	76 million	41.3	1998
American Idol season five finale	36 million	17	2006

The very concept of a “tastemaker” is undergoing a transformation. While the *American Idol* season five finale was reaching 36 million viewers, a low-tech home recording of a little boy acting loopy after a visit to the dentist (“David After Dentist”) garnered more than 37 million YouTube viewings in 2009 alone. The Internet appears to be eroding some of the tastemaking power of the traditional media outlets. No longer are the traditional mass media the only dominant forces in creating and promoting trends. Instead, information can spread across the globe without any involvement of traditional media. Websites made by nonprofessionals can reach more people daily than a major newspaper. Music review sites such as Pitchfork.com keep their eyes out for the next big thing, whereas review aggregators like RottenTomatoes.com allow readers to read hundreds of reviews by amateurs and professionals alike. Mobile applications like Yelp allow consumers to get individual reviews of a restaurant while they are standing outside it. Blogs make it possible for anyone with Internet access to potentially reach an audience of millions. Some popular bloggers transitioned from the traditional media world to the digital world, but others became well known without formal

institutional support. The celebrity gossip chronicler Perez Hilton had no formal training in journalism when he started his blog, PerezHilton.com, in 2005; within a few years, he was reaching millions of readers a month.

Email and text messages allow for the near-instant transmission of messages across vast geographic expanses. Although personal communications continue to dominate, email and text messages are increasingly used to directly transmit information about important news events. When Barack Obama wanted to announce his selection of Joe Biden as his vice-presidential running mate in the 2008 election, he bypassed the traditional televised press conference and instead sent the news to his supporters directly via text message—2.9 million text messages, to be exact.Nic Covey, "Flying Fingers," Nielsen, en-us.nielsen.com/main/insigh...flying_fingers (accessed July 15, 2010). Social networking sites, such as Facebook, and microblogging services, such as Twitter, are another source of late-breaking information. When Michael Jackson died of cardiac arrest in 2009, "RIP Michael Jackson" was a top trending topic on Twitter *before* mainstream media first reported the news.

Thanks to these and other digital-age media, the Internet has become a pop culture force, both a source of amateur talent and a source of amateur promotion. However, traditional media outlets still maintain a large amount of control and influence over U.S. pop culture. One key indicator is the fact that many singers or writers who first make their mark on the Internet quickly transition to more traditional media—YouTube star Justin Bieber was snapped up by a mainstream record company, and blogger Perez Hilton is regularly featured on MTV and VH1. New media stars are quickly absorbed into the old media landscape.

Getting Around the Gatekeepers

Not only does the Internet allow little known individuals to potentially reach a huge audience with their art or opinions, but it also allows content-creators to reach fans directly. Projects that may have not succeeded as part of the established pop culture/mass media machine may get a chance in the digital world. For example, the media establishment has been surprised by the success of some self-published books: First-time author Daniel Suarez had his novel manuscript rejected by dozens of literary agents before he decided to self-publish in 2006. Through savvy self-promotion via influential bloggers, Suarez garnered enough attention to land a contract with a major publishing house.



Figure 1.10 E-readers offer authors a way to get around the traditional publishing industry, but their thousands of options can make choosing hard on readers.

Suarez's story, though certainly exceptional, points to some of the questions facing creators and consumers of pop culture in the Internet age. Without the influence of an agent, editor, or public relations firm, self-published content may be able to remain closer to the creator's intention. However, how then does the content reach the public? Does every artist have to have the public relations and marketing skills of Suarez? And with so many self-published, self-promoted works uploaded to the Internet every day, how will any work—even great work—get noticed?

It's not impossible. Critic Laura Miller spells out some of the ways in which writers in particular are able to take control of their own publishing: Writers can upload their works to services run by Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble, she notes, "transforming them into e-books that are instantly available in high-profile online stores. Or they can post them on services like Urbis.com, Quillp.com, or CompletelyNovel.com and coax reviews from other hopeful users." Miller also points out that many of these companies can produce hard copies of books as well. While such a system may be a boon for writers who haven't had success with the traditional media establishment, Miller notes that it may not be the best option for readers, who "rarely complain that there isn't enough of a selection on Amazon or in their local superstore; they're more likely to ask for help in narrowing down their choices."Laura Miller, "When Anyone Can Be a Published Author," Salon, June 22, 2010, www.salon.com/books/laura_mil...10/06/22/slush (accessed July 15, 2010).

The commingling of the Internet and popular culture poses many intriguing questions for our future: Will the Internet era be marked by a huge and diffuse pop culture, where the power of traditional mass media declines and, along with it, the power of the universalizing blockbuster hit? Or will the Internet create a new set of tastemakers—influential bloggers or Tweeters? Or will the Internet serve as a platform for the old tastemakers to take on new forms? Or will the tastemakers become everyone?

More Reviewers=More Accurate Reviews…Right?

In 1993, *The New York Times* restaurant critic Ruth Reichl visited one of Manhattan's snootiest restaurants, Le Cirque, first as herself, a fashionable New Yorker, and then, one week later, in the guise of a frumpy Midwesterner. In her shocking review, the critic lambasted the restaurant's rude treatment of "Midwestern Molly"—an early battle in the fight for democratic reviews. Part of the point of Reichl's experiment was to find out how ordinary people were treated in restaurants. Now ordinary people can tell their own tales. The Internet, which has turned everyone with the time and interest into a potential reviewer, allows those ordinary people to have their voices heard. In the mid-2000s, websites such as Yelp and TripAdvisor boasted hundreds of reviews of restaurants, hotels, and salons provided by users. Amazon allowed users to review any product it sells, from textbooks to fertilizer to bathing suits. The era of the democratized review was upon us, and tastemaking was now everyone's job.

More Reviewers=More Accurate Reviews…Right?

By crowd-sourcing the review process, the idea was, these sites would arrive at a more accurate description of the service in choice. One powerful reviewer would no longer be able to wield disproportionate power. Instead, the wisdom of the crowd would make or break restaurants, movies, and everything else. Anyone who felt treated badly or scammed now had recourse to tell the world about it. By 2008, Yelp boasted four million reviews.

However, mass tastemaking isn't as perfect as some people had promised. One determined reviewer can overly influence a product's overall rating by contributing multiple votes. One study found that a handful of Amazon users were casting hundreds of votes, while most rarely wrote reviews at all. Online reviews also tend to skew to extremes—more reviews are written by the ecstatic and the furious, while the moderately pleased aren't riled up enough to post online about their experiences. And while traditional critics are supposed to uphold ethics, there's no such standard for online reviews. Savvy authors or restaurant owners have been known to slyly insert positive reviews of themselves, or have attempted to skew ratings systems. In order to get an accurate picture, potential buyers may find themselves wading through 20 or 30 online reviews, most of them from non-professionals. Consider these Amazon user reviews of William Shakespeare's "Hamlet": "There is really no point and it's really long," "I really didn't enjoy reading this book and I wish that our English teacher wouldn't force my class to read this play," and "don't know what Willy Shakespeare was thinking when he wrote this one play tragedy, but I thought this sure was boring! Hamlet does too much talking and not enough stuff."

Such unhelpful reviews have begun to remind people of the point of having reviews in the first place—that it's an advantage to have certain places, products, or ideas examined and critiqued by a trusted source. In an article about Yelp, *The New York Times* noted that one of the site's elite reviewers had racked up more than 300 reviews in 3 years, then snidely pointed out that "By contrast, a *The New York Times* restaurant critic might take six years to amass 300 reviews. The critic visits a restaurant several times, strives for anonymity and tries to sample every dish on the menu."Donald G. McNeil, "Eat and Tell," *The New*

York Times, Dining & Wine section, November 4, 2008. Whatever your vantage point, it's clear that old-style tastemaking is still around and still valuable—but the democratic review is here to stay.

- Traditionally, pop culture hits were often initiated or driven by the active support of media tastemakers. When mass media are limited in number, people with access to platforms for mass communication wield quite a bit of power in what becomes well-known, popular, or even infamous. Ed Sullivan's wildly popular variety show in the 1950s and 1960s served as a star-making vehicle and a tastemaker extraordinaire of that period.
- The digital age, with its proliferation of accessible media, has undermined the traditional role of the tastemaker. In contrast to the traditional media, Internet-based mass media is not limited by time or space and allows bloggers, critics, or wannabe stars to potentially reach millions without the backing of the traditional media industry.
- However, this democratization has its downsides as well. An abundance of mass communication without some form of selection can lead to information overload. Additionally, online reviews can be altered or biased.

? Exercise 6.8.1

Find a popular newspaper or magazine that discusses popular culture. Look through it to determine what pop culture movements, programs, or people it seems to be covering. What is its overall tone? What messages does it seem to be promoting, either implicitly or explicitly? Next, find a website that also deals with popular culture and ask yourself the same questions. Are there differences between the traditional media's and the new media's approach to popular culture? Do they focus on the same subjects? Do they take similar attitudes? Why or why not?

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6.9: Media Literacy

Learning Objectives

- Define media literacy, and explain why it is relevant to today's world.
- Discuss the role of individual responsibility and accountability when responding to pop culture.
- List the five key questions that can be asked about any media message.

In Gutenberg's age and the subsequent modern era, literacy—the ability to read and write—was a concern not only of educators but also of politicians, social reformers, and philosophers. A literate population, many reasoned, would be able to seek out information, stay informed about the news of the day, communicate with others, and make informed decisions in many spheres of life. Because of this, the reasoning went, literate people made better citizens, parents, and workers. In the 20th century, as literacy rates grew around the globe, there was a new sense that merely being able to read and write was not enough. In a world dominated by media, individuals needed to be able to understand, sort through and analyze the information they were bombarded with every day. In the second half of the 20th century, a name was finally put to this skill of being able to decode and process the messages and symbols transmitted via media: media literacy. According to the nonprofit National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), a person who is media literate is able to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information. Put another way by John Culkin, a pioneering advocate for media literacy education, "the new mass media—film, radio, TV—are new languages, their grammar as yet unknown."Kate Moody, "John Culkin, SJ: The Man Who Invented Media Literacy: 1928–1993," Center for Media Literacy, www.medialit.org/reading_room/article408.html (accessed July 15, 2010). Media literacy seeks to give media consumers the ability to understand this new language.

Why Be Media Literate?

Culkin called the pervasiveness of media "the unnoticed fact of our present," noting that media information was as omnipresent and easy to overlook as the air we breathe (and, he noted, "some would add that it is just as polluted"). Our exposure to media starts early—a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 68 percent of children aged two and younger spend an average of two hours in front of a screen (either computer or television) each day, while children under six spend as much time in front of a screen as they do playing outside. As previously noted, U.S. teenagers are spending an average of 7.5 hours with media daily, nearly as long as they spend in school. Media literacy isn't merely a skill for young people, however. Today, Americans of all ages get much of their information from various media sources. One crucial role of media literacy education is to enable all of us to skeptically examine the often-conflicting media messages we receive every day.

Advertising

Many of the hours people spend with media are with commercial-sponsored content. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) estimated that children aged 2 to 11 saw, on average, 25,629 television commercials a year, or more than 10,700 minutes of ads. Adults saw 52,469 ads, or about 15.5 days worth of television advertising.Debra Holt, Pauline Ippolito, Debra Desrochers, and Christopher Kelley, "Children's Exposure to TV Advertising in 1977 and 2004," Federal Trade Commission Bureau of Economics Staff Report, June 1, 2007. Children (and adults) are bombarded with contradictory messages—newspaper articles about the obesity epidemic are side by side with ads touting soda, candy, and fast food. The American Academy of Pediatrics maintains that advertising directed at children under eight is "inherently deceptive" and exploitative because young children cannot tell the difference between programs and commercials.Donald Shifrin, "Perspectives on Marketing, Self-Regulation and Childhood Obesity," Remarks given at Federal Trade Commission Workshop July 14–15, 2005, Washington, DC.

Advertising raises other issues as well. It often uses techniques of psychological pressure to influence decision making. Ads might appeal to vanity, insecurity, prejudice, fear, or the desire for adventure. This is not always a negative thing—antismoking public service announcements may rely on disgusting images of blackened lungs to shock viewers. Nonetheless, media literacy attempts to teach people to be informed and guarded consumers, and to evaluate claims with a critical eye. Do "four out of five doctors" really endorse the product?

Bias, Spin, and Misinformation

Advertisements may have the explicit goal of selling a product or idea, but they're not the only kind of media message with an agenda. A politician may hope to persuade potential voters that she has their best interests at heart. An ostensibly objective

journalist may allow his or her own political leanings to subtly slant articles. Magazine writers might avoid criticizing companies that advertise heavily in their pages. Broadcast news reporters may sensationalize stories in order to boost ratings—and advertising rates.

An important part of media literacy is remembering that mass communication messages are created by individuals, each with a set of values, assumptions, and priorities. Accepting media messages at face value could lead to head-spinning confusion, thanks to all the contradictory information that's out there. For example, in 2010, a highly contested governor's race in New Mexico led to conflicting ads from both candidates, Diane Denish and Susana Martinez. Each claimed that the other agreed to policies that benefited sex offenders. According to the media watchdog site Factcheck.org, the Denish team's ad "shows a pre-teen girl—seemingly about 9 years old—going down a playground slide in slow-motion, while ominous music plays in the background and an announcer discusses two sex crime cases. It ends with an empty swing, as the announcer says: 'Today we don't know where these sex offenders are lurking, because Susana Martinez didn't do her job.'" The opposing ad proclaims that "a department in Denish's cabinet gave sanctuary to criminal illegals [*sic*], like child molester Juan Gonzalez." Both claims are highly inflammatory, play on fear, and distort the reality behind each situation. Media literacy attempts to give people the skills to look critically at these and other media messages—to sift through various claims, and to make sense of the often-conflicting information we face every day.

The Center for Media Literacy's Five Core Concepts

1. All media messages are constructed.
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.
5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.http://www.medialit.org

New Skills for a New World

In the past, one goal of education was to provide students with the information deemed necessary to successfully engage with the world. Students memorized multiplication tables, state capitals, famous poems, and notable dates. In today's world, however, vast amounts of information are available at the click of a mouse. Even before the advent of the Internet, noted communications scholar David Berlo foresaw the consequences of expanding information technology: "Most of what we have called formal education has been intended to imprint on the human mind all of the information that we might need for a lifetime." Changes in technology necessitate changes in how we learn, Berlo noted, and these days "education needs to be geared toward the handling of data rather than the accumulation of data."David Shaw, "A Plea for Media Literacy in our Nation's Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2003.

Online technology surely has changed how we learn. For example, Wikipedia, a hugely popular Internet encyclopedia, is at the center of a debate on the proper use of online sources. In 2007, Middlebury College banned the use of Wikipedia as a source in history papers and exams. One of the school's librarians noted that the online encyclopedia "symbolizes the best and worst of the Internet. It's the best because everyone gets his/her say and can state their views. It's the worst because people who use it uncritically take for truth what is only opinion."Meredith Byers, "Controversy over use of Wikipedia in academic papers arrives at Smith," *Smith College Sophian*, News section, March 8, 2007. Or as comedian and satirist Stephen Colbert put it, "any user can change any entry, and if enough other users agree with them, it becomes true." In 2007, CIA computers were used to make edits on the site's article about the President of Iran. The Vatican allegedly doctored the entry for Irish activist and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams. A computer registered to the U.S. Democratic Party changed the site's page for Rush Limbaugh to proclaim that he was "racist" and a "bigot."Jonathan Fildes, "Wikipedia 'shows CIA page edits.'" *BBC News*, Science and Technology section, August 15, 2007. Media literacy teaches today's students how to sort through the Internet's cloud of data, ferret out reliable sources, and be aware of bias and unreliable sources.

Individual Accountability and Popular Culture

Ultimately, media literacy teaches that messages and images are constructed with various aims in mind and that each individual has the responsibility to evaluate and interpret these media messages. Mass communication may be created and disseminated by individuals, businesses, governments, or organizations, but they are always received by an individual, even if that individual is sitting in a crowded theater. Education, life experience, and a host of other factors allow each person to interpret constructed media in different ways; there is no "right answer," or one way to read the media. But media literacy skills help us to function better in our

media-rich environment, enabling us to be better democratic citizens, smarter shoppers, and more skeptical media consumers. As a means to this end, NAMLE has come up with a list of five questions to ask when analyzing media messages:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently?
4. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?Center for Media Literacy, MediaLitKit, www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/14A_CCKQposter.pdf (accessed July 15, 2010).

With these questions as a starting point, we can ensure that we're staying informed about where our information comes from, and why—important steps in any media literacy education.

- Media literacy, or the ability to decode and process media messages, is especially key in today's media-saturated society. Media surrounds contemporary Americans to an unprecedented degree, and from an early age. Because media messages are constructed with particular aims in mind, a media literate individual will interpret them with a critical eye. Advertisements, bias, spin, and misinformation are all things to look out for.
- Individual responsibility is crucial for media literacy because, while media messages may be produced by individuals, companies, governments, or organizations, they are always received and decoded by individuals.
- The following are NAMLE's five questions that can be asked about any media message:
    1. Who created this message?
    2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
    3. How might different people understand this message differently?
    4. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
    5. Why is this message being sent?

? Exercise 6.9.1

Find a media message of any kind and apply NAMLE's five questions to it. Did your impression change? How does this piece of mass communication attempt to get its message across? Do you think it's successful? Why or why not?

? End-of-Chapter Assessment

Review Questions

1. Questions for Section 1.1
    1. What is the difference between mass communication and mass media?
    2. What are some ways that culture affects media?
    3. What are some ways that media affect culture?
2. Questions for Section 1.2
    1. List four roles that media plays in society.
    2. Identify historical events that shaped the adoption of various mass communication platforms.
    3. How have technological shifts impacted the media industry over time?
3. Questions for Section 1.3
    1. What is a cultural period?
    2. How did events, technological advances, political changes, and philosophies help shape the modern era?
    3. What are some of the major differences between the modern and postmodern eras?
4. Questions for Section 1.4
    1. What is convergence, and what are some examples of it in daily life?
    2. What were the five types of convergence identified by Jenkins?
    3. How are different kinds of convergence shaping the digital age, on both an individual and a social level?

5. Questions for Section 1.5
    1. How does the value of free speech influence American culture and media?
    2. What are some of the limits placed on free speech, and how do they reflect social values?
    3. What is propaganda, and how does it reflect or influence social values?
    4. Who are gatekeepers, and how do they influence the media landscape?
6. Questions for Section 1.6
    1. What is popular culture and how does it differ from traditional notions of culture?
    2. Who are tastemakers and what are some key examples?
    3. How have tastemakers changed with changes in technology?
7. Questions for Section 1.7
    1. What is media literacy, and why is it relevant in today's world?
    2. What is the role of the individual in interpreting media messages?
    3. What are the five questions that NAMLE suggests should be asked of any media message?

? Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does the history of media technologies have to teach us about present-day America? How might current and emerging technologies change our cultural landscape in the near future?
2. Are gatekeepers and tastemakers necessary for mass media? How is the Internet helping us to re-imagine these roles?
3. The idea of cultural periods presumes that changes in society and technology lead to dramatic shifts in the way people see the world. How has the Internet and digital technology changed how people interact with their environment, and with each other? Are we changing to a new cultural period, or is contemporary life still a continuation of the postmodern era?
4. U.S. law regulates free speech through laws on obscenity, copyright infringement, and other things. Why are some forms of expression protected and others aren't? How do you think cultural values will change U.S. media law in the near future?
5. Does media literacy education belong in American schools? Why or why not? What might a media literacy curriculum look like?

Career Connection

In a heavily mediated world, almost every organization, from a university to a multinational corporation, employs media specialists. Many organizations also use consultants to help analyze and manage the interaction between their organizations and the media. Independent consultants develop projects, keep abreast of media trends, and provide advice based on industry reports. Or, as writer, speaker, and media consultant Merlin Mann puts it, the "primary job is to stay curious about everything, identify the points where two forces might clash, then enthusiastically share what that might mean, as well as why you might care."

Read the blog post "So what do consultants do?" at http://www.consulting-business.com/so-what-do-consultants-do.html.

Now explore the site of Merlin Mann at http://www.merlinmann.com. Make sure to take a look at the "Bio" and "FAQs" sections. These two pages will help you answer the following questions:

1. Merlin Mann provides some work for free and charges a significant amount for other projects. What are some of the indications he gives in his biography about what he values? How do you think his values influence his fees?
2. Check out Merlin's "Projects." What are some of the projects that Merlin is or has been involved with? Now look at the "Speaking" page. Can you see a link between his projects and his role as a prominent writer, speaker, and consultant?
3. Check out Merlin's FAQ section. What is his attitude about social networking sites? What about public relations? Why do you think he holds these opinions?
4. Think about niches in the Internet industry where a consultant might be helpful. Do you have expertise, theories, or reasonable advice that might make you a useful asset for a business or organization? Find an example of an organization or group with some media presence. If you were this group's consultant, how would you recommend that they better reach their goals?

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6.10: Discourse, Institutions, and Power

Discourses, institutions and the social power relations and intra-group tensions and agreements they represent are all very interesting in their own right. But now might be a good time to link this back to communication studies. Why should we care about discourses and institutions? Firstly, discourses and the institutions that produce and propagate them reflect the flow of power and control in society – most of the discourses that we are exposed to reflect the dominant position in society, and conflict between discourses, such as with smoking in the second half of the 20th century, reveal underlying social tensions between those dominant discourses and new and emerging discourses. So looking at discourse and institutions reveals for us who may speak, who might be silenced, and why certain groups, activities or relationships are framed in particular ways – so why might one group frame an individual to be a terrorist and another a freedom fighter could be revealed by understanding the institutional context of the speakers.

Secondly, institutions shape the communicative process. The media, particularly the commercial media, operates within institutional restrictions such as policy, copyright, and broadcast practice. Certain types of language and even types of signs are encouraged within particular institutional contexts, and other types are not. So discourses shape our communication and the types of texts we send, and how we understand the texts and messages we receive – we never communicate in a vacuum, we always bring to bear on our communications our context, our social norms, and our prior experiences.

Finally, an understanding of the discourses and their institutions that are active in a society helps us to come to terms with how communication is operating on a macro-level – so not just looking at individual texts or individual moments of communication, but communication as a whole. A good example is a classroom. If we were to look at a classroom in this way, you would need to think about the wider institution of education, the relationships and expectations it has in regard to teachers and students, and dominant discourses about knowledge and learning. Looking at the classroom this way helps to unpack the classroom-as-institution, and makes clearer the privileges and power it fosters. For example, who can speak and who must listen in a classroom is tied to these institutional relationship and supported by discourses of education that are so deeply engrained in us that many of us do not question it until we see other types of educational institutions and the types of discourses they support.

Discussion

1. What are some current discourses within the Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Regions?
2. Identify the signs and language employed in those debates and consider whether or not they are unique to the particular discourse or institution.
3. Then identify who is ‘speaking’, and who is not, and consider this information in terms of the discourse and institutional contexts.

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6.11: Institutions

So what are institutions? We sometimes talk of things like banking institutions, or medical institutions, which sometimes evoke ideas of institutions as places, whereas institutions are really a mechanism of society. We create institutions as a way to govern and maintain society – they are structures that hold together social life. For example, we sometimes speak of the family as an institution. We are not referring to some discrete object when we talk about family – we are interested in the relationships that we have grouped together under the label of family. Different societies have different groupings under that label. For some, it might be the nuclear family. For other societies, it might be the extended family, or some other set of relations beyond notions of biology. What is important to remember is that each institution reflects and supports the values of the society in which it is situated.

Societies build and maintain institutions to create and perpetuate acceptable modes of behavior and interaction that help propagate and stabilize that society. In capitalist societies, banks are considered an institution in that they refer to a relationship of labour and capital. In the economic crashes of the early 21st century, banks were said to be destabilizing. This means that the relationships that form the institutions of banking were seen to be weakening, and as such, we saw a commensurate change in the notions of labour and capital, and their relationships and roles within society.

Social relations that are codified into institutions therefore have within them some measure of power. And this is where we come back to discourses. Institutions produce discourses as part of the interaction of their social relations, and these discourses reflect and reinforce the dominant ideologies that support and maintain these institutions. It is only when these discourses are challenged that we see the institutions challenged, and sometimes this leads to an institutional change which reflects the changing values in a society.

That's a lot of looping around, so let's take a look at an example that has a number of different communicative elements. Let's look at smoking.

Smoking as a social issue and a personal behaviour has now entered the public health discourses. It is now related to and reflects a negative social position – smoking is seen to be socially undesirable, and these negative connotations are framed in terms of health and wellness.

This is a relatively recent change. In the first half of the 20th century, smoking occupied a different institutional position, and was part of a different set of discourses related to relaxation and social desirableness. In the immediate post-war period, smoking was seen as a masculine pursuit, and women did not smoke publicly until smoking as a sign entered into discourses around female enfranchisement and the gendering of power. With the rise of public relations, discourses of smoking as a socially acceptable activity for both men and women were constructed by the early ad men, reflecting a developing institutional idea of feminine power. They even came up with the tagline 'torches of freedom.' (Bernays) Smoking was a public performance of power, prestige, and luxury and so the sign of smoking became associated with such discourses.

To propagate the business of smoking (a very profitable industry) as the first negative health impacts of smoking became apparent, the discourses surrounding smoking shifted again, and we started to see the rise of the early medical and health rhetorics to counteract the negative discourses of smoking-related illnesses. So in the advertising around cigarettes from 1960 to 1990, we can see a tension between two competing institutional discourses – smoking as being good for you (social discourse) and smoking as being bad for you (medical/health discourse).



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1949 TV commercial from Camel cigarettes

Slowly, over the decades, the smoking-as-unhealthy discourse gained dominance, and smoking shifted more fully to fit into discourses of health and social wellness as the institutional landscape around medicine, the human body and leisure were renegotiated to take into account these new relationships and the new signification of smoking cigarettes.

Now, smoking is something of a social taboo, reflecting the new dominant ideologies around smoking and the relationships that represents between smoking and health, and evoking medical discourses and symbols and language of not only ill-health, but also signifiers of shame and ostracism.



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Australian anti-smoking ad (nd)

We can see similar trajectories of discourses and institutions regarding race, class and gender throughout history. Over time, as new ideologies gained social power, old institutions underwent a period of disruption, and new institutions, new sets of social relations, were built up in their place.

Discussion

1. Describe what you understand as an institution in your own words.
2. Consider the institutionalised discourse about Maori culture during history. How has it changed over the years?

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6.12: Discourse and Institutions

Nearly all the communication we are exposed to or engage in conform to discursive patterns. Discourses are so ubiquitous that, if you looked it up in a dictionary, sometimes discourses are defined as ‘communication or debate.’ Yet considered critically, discourses are much more interesting and complex than that.

We can start off by thinking about discourses as a form of communication that conforms to or reflects a particular social practice or ideological position. So we can speak of legal discourses, environmental discourses, medical discourses, feminist discourses, etc. All communication conforms to at least one discourse. This is because all communication is encoded and decoded, and as such passes through institutional and ideological filters that shape how the messages are encoded and decoded. Think of it as a kind of spin we consciously or subconsciously put on any message we give off or receive. A famous and basic example of this is news coverage of an attack – do you call the attackers terrorists, or do you call them freedom fighters? Insurgents or soldiers? Broadly speaking, both pairs have similar meanings to each other, but each word conjures up different emotions, moods and tones. Each fits within a different discursive position. If you call them freedom fighters, you are aligning your coverage to the ideology of those who are attacked. If you call them terrorists, you are constructing a more oppositional discourse by evoking signs and language that evokes such ideologies.

But discourses are more than signs. They are also organizing principles that set out the boundaries between different fields and areas and positions. Discourses can also include other forms of communication beyond written and spoken language. For example, what does a white lab coat signify? If you’re in a hospital, it might be part of the discursive system of medicine; in a meatworks, it might be worn by the butcher. These discourses do not operate in isolation but are part of, produced by, and help support institutions.

Discussion Questions

1. What are discourses? Can you think of an example where there are competing discourses?

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6.13: Agenda Setting

The media can and does have a strong effect on what people think about. By highlighting certain events repeatedly, they create a sense of urgency about those issues even though this is not always an accurate reflection of reality.

Reality is what is actually happening in the world pertaining to the economy, society, politics and science. The **media selectively highlights** certain events and gives them prominence. The criteria for the selection depends very much on the ideology of the media editors and their vested interests. By highlighting certain events an uncritical audience will perceive and construct the mediated reality as reality. One example is the royal wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton, which mesmerised the world, including parts of the world that have no connection to the British monarchy. Discerning audiences may well ask why the wedding of two people, who are in no way related to them, is important enough to justify worldwide media attention, or indeed, how and why it might be relevant to them?

The agenda setting theory was formally developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) when they studied the US Presidential Election of 1968. Their analysis of the news and media coverage found a strong correlation to the opinions held by the voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Similar findings were found in the media study surrounding the murder trial of OJ Simpson (Salwen & Driscoll, 1997) and the attempted impeachment of US President Clinton (Yioutas & Segvic, 2003).

These videos explain the agenda setting theory in detail:



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From CSIxxTwee under Standard YouTube License



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Discussion

1. Obviously journalists cannot include everything that happens in the world on any given day in their Newspaper TV or internet news program.
2. Investigate a cross section of media sources on a given day – compare how and why the different sources choose, and then mediate, the events for their expected audience.
3. Then consider the question, are they accurately representing the importance of the issues of the day?

References

McCombs, M.E and Shaw, D.L. (1972) The agenda-setting function of mass media. Public Opinion Quarterly,36 (2).

Salwen, M. B., & Driscoll, P. D. (1997). Consequences of third-person perception in support of press restrictions in the OJ Simpson trial. Journal of communication, 47(2), 60-78.

Yioutas, J., & Segvic, I. (2003). Revisiting the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal: The convergence of agenda setting and framing. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 80(3), 567-582.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Media Effects

7.1: Mass Media and Its Messages
7.2: Media Effects Theories
7.3: Methods of Researching Media Effects
7.4: Media Studies Controversies
7.5: Media Literacy and Media Studies Research
7.6: Advertising, Public Relations and Propaganda

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7.1: Mass Media and Its Messages

Learning Objectives

- Explain the different ways mass media affects culture.
- Analyze cultural messages that the media send.
- Explain the ways new media have affected culture.

When media consumers think of media messages, they may think of televised public service announcements or political advertisements. These obvious examples provide a venue for the transfer of a message through a medium, whether that message is a plea for fire safety or the statement of a political position. But what about more abstract political advertisements that simply show the logo of a candidate and a few simple words? Media messages can range from overt statements to vague expressions of cultural values.

Disagreements over the content of media messages certainly exist. Consider the common allegations of political bias against various news organizations. Accusations of hidden messages or agenda-driven content have always been an issue in the media, but as the presence of media grows, the debate concerning media messages increases. This dialogue is an important one; after all, mass media have long been used to persuade. Many modern persuasive techniques stem from the use of media as a propaganda tool. The role of propaganda and persuasion in the mass media is a good place to start when considering various types of media effects.

Propaganda and Persuasion

Encyclopedia Britannica defines propaganda simply as the "manipulation of information to influence public opinion."*Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Propaganda." This definition works well for this discussion because the study and use of propaganda has had an enormous influence on the role of persuasion in modern mass media. In his book *The Creation of the Media*, Paul Starr argues that the United States, as a liberal democracy, has favored employing an independent press as a public guardian, thus putting the media in an inherently political position.Paul Starr, *Creation of the Media* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 394–395. The United States—in contrast to other nations where media are held in check—has encouraged an independent commercial press and thus given the powers of propaganda and persuasion to the public.Paul Starr, *Creation of the Media* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 394–395.

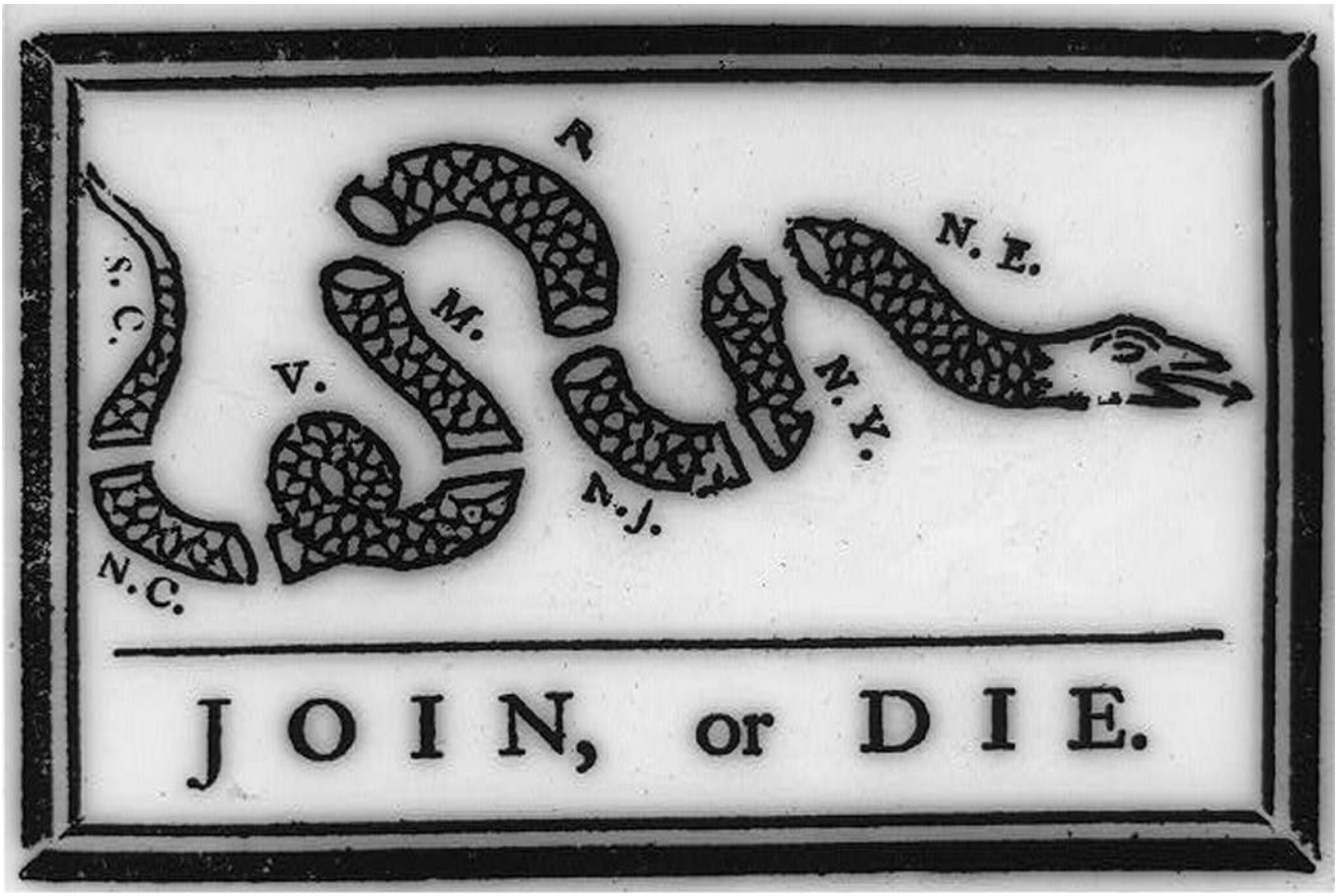


Figure 2.2 Benjamin Franklin used a powerful image of a severed snake to emphasize the importance of the colonies joining together during the American Revolution.

Like any type of communication, propaganda is not inherently good or bad. Whether propaganda has a positive or negative effect on society and culture depends on the motivations of those who use it and the understandings of those who receive it. People promoting movements as wide-ranging as Christianity, the American Revolution, and the communist revolutions of the 20th century have all used propaganda to disseminate their messages.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 60–61. Newspapers and pamphlets that glorified the sacrifices at Lexington and Concord and trumpeted the victories of George Washington's army greatly aided the American Revolution. For example, Benjamin Franklin's famous illustration of a severed snake with the caption "Join, or Die" serves as an early testament to the power and use of print propaganda.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 80–81.

As you will learn in Chapter 4, the penny press made newspapers accessible to a mass audience and became a force for social cohesion during the 1830s.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 95–96. Magazines adopted a similar format later in the 19th century, and print media's political and social power rose. In an infamous example of the new power of print media, some newspapers encouraged the Spanish-American War of 1898 by fabricating stories of Spanish atrocities and sabotage.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 103–104. For example, after the USS *Maine* sunk off the coast of Havana, Cuba, some newspapers blamed the Spanish—even though there was no evidence—fueling the public's desire for war with Spain.

The present-day, pejorative connotation of propaganda recalls the utilization of mass media by World War I–era governments to motivate the citizenry of many countries to go to war. Some media outlets characterized that war as a global fight between Anglo civilization and Prussian barbarianism. Although some of those fighting the war had little understanding of the political motivations behind it, wartime propaganda convinced them to enlist.Mark Crispin Miller, introduction to *Propaganda*, by Edward Bernays (Brooklyn, NY: IG Publishing, 2005), 11. As you will read in Chapter 12, World War I legitimized the advertising profession in the minds of government and corporate leaders because its techniques were useful in patriotic propaganda campaigns. Corporations quickly adapted to this development and created an advertising boom in the 1920s by using World War I propaganda

techniques to sell products.Mark Crispin Miller, introduction to *Propaganda*, by Edward Bernays (Brooklyn, NY: IG Publishing, 2005), 12.

In modern society, the persuasive power of the mass media is well known. In the years after 9/11, there were multiple reports of the death of Osama bin Laden; people desperately wanted to believe he was killed. In reality, he was killed in 2011. Governments, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and political campaigns rely on both new and old media to create messages and to send them to the general public. During and since the 2008 Presidential election, there has been constant scrutiny over Barack Obama's birthplace and citizenship; the reports are discredited, but the questions resurface. The comparatively unregulated nature of U.S. media has made, for better or worse, a society in which the tools of public persuasion are available to everyone.

Media Effects and Behavior

Although the mass media send messages created specifically for public consumption, they also convey messages that are not properly defined as propaganda or persuasion. Some argue that these messages influence behavior, especially the behavior of young people.Alexandra Beatty, "Studying Media Effects on Children and Youth: Improving Methods and Measures, Workshop Summary," March 2–3, 2006, The National Academies Press, http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11706; "Media Influence on Youth," Crisis Connection, www.crisisconnectioninc.org/t...e_on_youth.htm. Violent, sexual, and compulsive behaviors have been linked to media consumption and thus raise important questions about the effects of media on culture.

Violence and the Media

On April 20, 1999, students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold entered their Denver-area high school, Columbine High School, armed with semiautomatic weapons and explosives. Over the next few hours, the pair killed 12 classmates and one faculty member before committing suicide.Gina Lamb, "Columbine High School," Times Topics, *New York Times*, April 17, 2008, http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine_high_school/index.html. The tragedy and its aftermath captured national attention, and in the weeks following the Columbine High School shootings, politicians and pundits worked to assign blame. Their targets ranged from the makers of the first-person shooter video game *Doom* to the Hollywood studios responsible for *The Matrix*.Tom Brook, "Is Hollywood to Blame?" *BBC News*, April 23, 1999, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1999/03/99/tom_brook/326529.stm.

However, in the years since the massacre, research has revealed that the perpetrators were actually attempting a terrorist bombing rather than a first-person shooter style rampage.Greg Toppo, "10 Years Later, the Real Story Behind Columbine," *USA Today*, April 13, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-04-13-columbine-myths_N.htm. But did violent video games so desensitize the two teenagers to violence that they could contemplate such a plan? Did movies that glorify violent solutions create a culture that would encourage people to consider such methods? Because modern culture is so immersed in media, the issue becomes a particularly complex one, and it can be difficult to understand the types of effects that violent media produce.

A number of studies have verified certain connections between violent video games and violent behavior in young people. For example, studies have found that some young people who play violent video games reported angry thoughts and aggressive feelings immediately after playing. Other studies, such as one conducted by Dr. Chris A. Anderson and colleagues, point to correlations between the amount of time spent playing violent video games and increased incidence of aggression.Craig A. Anderson and others, "The Influence of Media Violence on Youth," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 4, no. 3 (2003): 81–110. However, these studies do not prove that video games cause violence. Video game defenders argue that violent people can be drawn to violent games, and they point to lower overall incidence of youth violence in recent years compared to past decades.Jill U. Adams, "Effects of Violent Video Games," *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 2010, http://articles.latimes.com/2010/may/03/health/la-he-closer-20100503. Other researchers admit that individuals prone to violent acts are indeed drawn to violent media; however, they claim that by keeping these individuals in a movie theater or at home, violent media have actually contributed to a reduction in violent social acts.Peter Goodman, "Violent Films May Cut Real Crime, Study Finds," *New York Times*, January 7, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/07/technology/07iht-violence.4.9058958.html.



Figure 2.3 The 1999 Columbine High School shooting led to greater debate and criticism over violent video games. Source: Used with permission from Getty Images.

Whether violent media actually cause violence remains unknown, but unquestionably these forms of media send an emotional message to which individuals respond. Media messages are not limited to overt statements; they can also use emotions, such as fear, love, happiness, and depression. These emotional reactions partially account for the intense power of media in our culture.

Sex and the Media

In many types of media, sexual content—and its strong emotional message—can be prolific. A recent study by researchers at the University of North Carolina titled "Sexy Media Matter: Exposure to Sexual Content in Music, Movies, Television, and Magazines Predicts Black and White Adolescents' Sexual Behavior" found that young people with heavy exposure to sexually themed media ranging from music to movies are twice as likely to engage in early sexual behavior as young people with light exposure. Although the study does not prove a conclusive link between sexual behavior and sexually oriented media, researchers concluded that media acted as an influential source of information about sex for these youth groups.Kathleen Doheny, "Mass Media May Prompt Kids to Try Sex: Study," *Health Scout*, April 3, 2006, www.healthscout.com/news/1/531862/main.html. Researcher Jane Brown thinks part of the reason children watch sexual content is related to puberty and their desire to learn about sex. While many parents are hesitant to discuss sex with their children, the media can act like a "super peer," providing information in movies, television, music, and magazines.Kathleen Doheny, "Mass Media May Prompt Kids to Try Sex: Study," *Health Scout*, April 3, 2006, www.healthscout.com/news/1/531862/main.html. Reality series, such as *Teen Mom* and *16 and Pregnant*, are prevalent on the popular MTV station. We will explore in greater detail the impact of sexual content in the media in Chapter 14.

Cultural Messages and the Media

The media sends messages that reinforce cultural values. These values are perhaps most visible in celebrities and the roles that they adopt. Actors such as Jake Gyllenhaal and Scarlett Johansson have come to represent aspects of masculinity and femininity that have been adopted into mainstream culture in the last 10 years. In recent years, baseball player Derek Jeter appeared in television,

film, magazines, and advertising campaigns as a model of athleticism and willpower. Singers such as Bono of U2 have represented a sense of freedom and rebellion against mainstream culture.

Although many consider celebrity culture superficial and a poor reflection of a country's values, not all celebrities are simply entertainers. Civil rights leaders, social reformers, and other famous public figures have come to represent important cultural accomplishments and advancements through their representations in the media. When images of Abraham Lincoln or Lady Gaga appear in the media, they resonate with cultural and historical themes greatly separated from mere fame.

Celebrities can also reinforce cultural stereotypes that marginalize certain groups. Television and magazines from the mid-20th century often portrayed women in a submissive, domestic role, both reflecting and reinforcing the cultural limitations imposed on women at the time. Advertising icons developed during the early 20th century, such as Aunt Jemima and the Cream of Wheat chef, similarly reflected and reinforced a submissive, domestic servant role for African Americans. Other famous stereotypes—such as the Lone Ranger's Native American sidekick, Tonto, or Mickey Rooney's Mr. Yunioshi role in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*—also reinforced American preconceptions about ethnic predispositions and capabilities.



Figure 2.4 Tonto from *The Lone Ranger* reinforced cultural stereotypes about Native Americans. Do you think this type of characterization would be acceptable in modern television? Source: Used with permission from Getty Images.

Whether actual or fictional, celebrities and their assumed roles send a number of different messages about cultural values. They can promote courageous truth telling, hide and prolong social problems, or provide a concrete example of an abstract cultural value.

New Media and Society

New media—the Internet and other digital forms of communication—have had large effects on society. This communication and information revolution has created a great deal of anguish about digital literacy and other issues that inevitably accompany such a social change. In his book on technology and communication, *A Better Pencil*, Dennis Baron discusses this issue:

For Plato, only speech, not writing, can produce the kind of back-and-forth—the dialogue—that's needed to get at the truth … the text, orphaned by its author once it's on the page, cannot defend itself against misreading…. These are strong arguments, but even in Plato's day they had been rendered moot by the success of the written word. Although the literacy rate in classical Greece was well below 10 percent, writing had become an important feature of the culture. People had learned to trust and use certain kinds of writing—legal texts, public inscriptions, business documents, personal letters, and even literature—and as they did so, they realized that writing, on closer examination, turned out to be neither more nor less reliable or ambiguous than the spoken word, and it was just as real.Dennis Baron, *A Better Pencil: Readers, Writers, and the Digital Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.

Baron makes the point that all communication revolutions have created upheavals and have changed the standards of literacy and communication. This historical perspective gives a positive interpretation to some otherwise ominous developments in communication and culture.

Information

The Internet has made an incredible amount of new information available to the general public. Both this wealth of information and the ways people process it are having an enormous effect on culture. New perceptions of information have emerged as access to it grows. Older-media consumption habits required in-depth processing of information through a particular form of media. For example, consumers read, watched, or viewed a news report in its entirety, typically within the context of a news publication or program. Fiction appeared in book or magazine form.

Today, information is easier to access, thus more likely to traverse several forms of media. An individual may read an article on a news website and then forward part of it to a friend. That person in turn describes it to a coworker without having seen the original context. The ready availability of information through search engines may explain how a clearly satirical *Onion* article on the Harry Potter phenomenon came to be taken as fact. Increasingly, media outlets cater to this habit of searching for specific bits of information devoid of context. Information that will attract the most attention is often featured at the expense of more important stories. At one point on March 11, 2010, for example, *The Washington Post* website's most popular story was "Maintaining a Sex Life."Michiko Kakutani, "Texts Without Context," *New York Times*, March 17, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/books/21mash.html.

Another important development in the media's approach to information is its increasing subjectivity. Some analysts have used the term cyberbalkanization to describe the way media consumers filter information. Balkanization is an allusion to the political fragmentation of Eastern Europe's Balkan states following World War I, when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated into a number of ethnic and political fragments. Customized news feeds allow individuals to receive only the kinds of news and information they want and thus block out sources that report unwanted stories or perspectives. Many cultural critics have pointed to this kind of information filtering as the source of increasing political division and resulting loss of civic discourse. When media consumers hear only the information they want to, the common ground of public discourse that stems from general agreement on certain principles inevitably grows smaller.Michiko Kakutani, "Texts Without Context," *New York Times*, March 17, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/books/21mash.html.

Literacy

On one hand, the growth of the Internet as the primary information source exposes the public to increased levels of text, thereby increasing overall literacy. Indeed, written text is essential to the Internet: Web content is overwhelmingly text-based, and successful participation in Internet culture through the use of blogs, forums, or a personal website requires a degree of textual literacy that is not necessary for engagement in television, music, or movies.

Critics of Internet literacy, however, describe the majority of forum and blog posts as subliterate and argue that the Internet has replaced the printed newspapers and books that actually raised the standards of literacy. One nuanced look at the Internet's effect on

the way a culture processes and perceives information states that literacy will not simply increase or decrease but will change qualitatively.Suzanne Choney, “Internet Making Our Brains Different, Not Dumb,” *MSNBC*, Feb. 19, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35464896/ns/technology_and_science-tech_and_gadgets/. Perhaps the standards for literacy will shift to an emphasis on simplicity and directness, for example, rather than on elaborate uses of language.

News


THE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON
McCHRYSTAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Figure 2.5 President Barack Obama fired General Stanley McChrystal after a controversial *Rolling Stone* story in which McChrystal spoke poorly of the Obama administration was leaked on the Internet.

Certainly, the Internet has affected the way that cultures consume news. The public expects to receive information quickly, and news outlets respond rapidly to breaking stories. On Monday, June 21, 2010, for example, a spokesperson for *Rolling Stone* magazine first released quotes from a story featuring General Stanley McChrystal publicly criticizing members of the Obama administration on matters of foreign policy. By that evening, the story had become national news despite the fact *Rolling Stone* didn't even post it to its website until Tuesday morning—some time after several news outlets had already posted the entire story on their own sites. Later that same day, McChrystal issued a public apology, and on Wednesday flew to Washington where President Barack Obama fired him. The printed *Rolling Stone* issue featuring the article hit newsstands Friday, two days after McChrystal had been replaced.Jim Timpane, "New Media Too Speedy to Outflank," *Philly.com*, June 24, 2010, http://www.philly.com/philly/entertainment/20100624_New_media_too_speedy_to_outflank.html.

Convergence Culture

As we have seen, the term *convergence* can hold several different meanings. In *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Henry Jenkins offers a useful definition of convergence as it applies to new media:

"By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want."Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 2.

A self-produced video on the YouTube website that gains enormous popularity and thus receives the attention of a news outlet is a good example of this migration of both content and audiences. Consider this flow: The video appears and gains notoriety, so a news outlet broadcasts a story about the video, which in turn increases its popularity on YouTube. This migration works in a number of ways. Humorous or poignant excerpts from television or radio broadcasts are often posted on social media sites and blogs, where they gain popularity and are seen by more people than had seen the original broadcast.

Thanks to new media, consumers now view all types of media as participatory. For example, the massively popular talent show *American Idol* combines an older-media format—television—with modern media consumption patterns by allowing the home audience to vote for a favorite contestant. However, *American Idol* segments regularly appear on YouTube and other websites, where people who may never have seen the show comment on and dissect them. Phone companies report a regular increase in phone traffic following the show, presumably caused by viewers calling in to cast their votes or simply to discuss the program with friends and family. As a result, more people are exposed to the themes, principles, and culture of *American Idol* than the number of people who actually watch the show.Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 83.

New media have encouraged greater personal participation in media as a whole. Although the long-term cultural consequences of this shift cannot yet be assessed, the development is undeniably a novel one. As audiences become more adept at navigating media, this trend will undoubtedly increase.

Bert Is Evil


USAMA BIN LADEN



Figure 2.6

In 2001, high school student Dino Ignacio created a collage of *Sesame Street* character Bert with terrorist Osama bin Laden as part of a series for his website. Called “Bert Is Evil,” the series featured the puppet engaged in a variety of illicit activities. A Bangladesh-based publisher looking for images of bin Laden found the collage on the Internet and used it in an anti-American protest poster, presumably without knowledge of who Bert was. This ended up in a CNN report on anti-American protests, and public outrage over the use of Bert made Ignacio’s original site a much-imitated cult phenomenon.

The voyage of this collage from a high school student’s website to an anti-American protest poster in the Middle East to a cable television news network and finally back to the Internet provides a good illustration of the ways in which content migrates across media platforms in the modern era. As the collage crossed geographic and cultural boundaries, it grew on both corporate and grassroots media. While this is not the norm for media content, the fact that such a phenomenon is possible illustrates the new directions in which media is headed.Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 1–2.

Key Takeaways

- Propaganda and persuasion have long been a part of the interactions between media and culture.
- Most studies on media and behavior do not establish direct links between the two but do reveal important correlations among media, violence, and sexual behavior.
- Through the media, celebrities have come to signify important cultural values and tendencies, and they transmit specific cultural messages.
- New digital forms of media have revolutionized the way people access and consume media content. Rather than simply replacing old media, however, new forms of media encourage participatory media consumption and content migration.

? Exercise 7.1.1

1. Celebrities can represent cultural values and principles when they are portrayed in the media. The same celebrity can represent very different things depending on the form of media and its portrayal of that person. Find a celebrity magazine, such as *People* or *Us Weekly*, either online or in print, and choose one of the celebrities mentioned. Then, answer the following questions:
   - How is this celebrity portrayed in the magazine?
   - What kind of roles does the celebrity take in other forms of media, such as television or film?
   - How do these portrayals associate with specific cultural values?
2. Explain how the media has affected culture. Be sure to discuss the following topics and to provide examples of each.
   - Propaganda and persuasion
   - Behavior
   - Cultural messages
3. How has new media affected literacy and information consumption? How is this different from older forms of media?

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7.2: Media Effects Theories

Learning Objectives

- Identify the basic theories of media effects.
- Explain the uses of various media effects theories.

Early media studies focused on the use of mass media in propaganda and persuasion. However, journalists and researchers soon looked to behavioral sciences to help figure out the possible effect of mass media and communications on society. Scholars have developed many different approaches and theories to figure this out. Other scholars challenge whether research can ever untangle the relationship of media and effects. You can refer to these theories as you consider for yourself the media's effect on individuals and culture.

In one of the earliest formulations of media effects, widespread fear that mass-media messages could outweigh other stabilizing cultural influences, such as family and community, led to what is known as the direct effects model of media studies. This model, prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s, assumed that audiences passively accepted media messages and would exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages. For example, following the radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds* in 1938 (which was a fictional news report of an alien invasion), some people panicked and believed the story to be true.

Challenges to the Direct Effects Theory

The results of the *People's Choice Study* challenged this model. Conducted in 1940, the study attempted to gauge the effects of political campaigns on voter choice. Researchers found that voters who consumed the most media had generally already decided for which candidate to vote, while undecided voters generally turned to family and community members to help them decide. The study thus discredited the direct effects model and influenced a host of other media theories.Ralph Hanson, *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009), 80–81. These theories do not necessarily give an all-encompassing picture of media effects but rather work to illuminate a particular aspect of media influence.

Marshall McLuhan's Influence on Media Studies

As noted in Chapter 1, during the early 1960s, English professor Marshall McLuhan wrote two books that had an enormous effect on the history of media studies. Published in 1962 and 1964, respectively, the *Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media* both traced the history of media technology and illustrated the ways these innovations had changed both individual behavior and the wider culture. *Understanding Media* introduced the phrase that McLuhan has become known for: "The medium is the message." This notion represented a novel take on attitudes toward media—that the media themselves are instrumental in shaping human and cultural experience.

His bold statements about media gained McLuhan a great deal of attention as both his supporters and critics responded to his utopian views about the ways media could transform 20th-century life. McLuhan spoke of a media-inspired "global village" at a time when Cold War paranoia was at its peak and the Vietnam War was a hotly debated subject. Although 1960s-era utopians received these statements positively, social realists found them cause for scorn. Despite—or perhaps because of—these controversies, McLuhan became a pop culture icon, mentioned frequently in the television sketch-comedy program *Laugh-In* and appearing as himself in Woody Allen's film *Annie Hall*.

The Internet and its accompanying cultural revolution have made McLuhan's bold utopian visions seem like prophecies. Indeed, his work has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Analysis of McLuhan's work has, interestingly, not changed very much since his works were published. His supporters point to the hopes and achievements of digital technology and the utopian state that such innovations promise. The current critique of McLuhan, however, is a bit more revealing of the state of modern media studies. Media scholars are much more numerous now than they were during the 1960s, and many of these scholars criticize McLuhan's lack of methodology and theoretical framework.

Despite his lack of scholarly diligence, McLuhan had a great deal of influence on media studies. Professors at Fordham University have formed an association of McLuhan-influenced scholars. McLuhan's other great achievement is the popularization of the concept of media studies. His work, perhaps ironically, brought the idea of media effects into the public arena and created a new way for the public to consider the influence of media on culture.Alexander Stille, "Marshall McLuhan Is Back From the Dustbin of History; With the Internet, His Ideas Again Seem Ahead of Their Time," *New York Times*,

October 14, 2000, http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/14/arts/marshall-mcluhan-back-dustbin-history-with-internet-his-ideas-again-seem-ahead.html.

Agenda-Setting Theory

In contrast to the extreme views of the direct effects model, the agenda-setting theory of media stated that mass media determine the issues that concern the public rather than the public's views. Under this theory, the issues that receive the most attention from media become the issues that the public discusses, debates, and demands action on. This means that the media are determining what issues and stories the public thinks about. Therefore, when the media fail to address a particular issue, it becomes marginalized in the minds of the public.Ralph Hanson, *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009), 92.

When critics claim that a particular media outlet has an agenda, they are drawing on this theory. Agendas can range from a perceived liberal bias in the news media to the propagation of cutthroat capitalist ethics in films. For example, the agenda-setting theory explains such phenomena as the rise of public opinion against smoking. Before the mass media began taking an antismoking stance, smoking was considered a personal health issue. By promoting antismoking sentiments through advertisements, public relations campaigns, and a variety of media outlets, the mass media moved smoking into the public arena, making it a public health issue rather than a personal health issue.James Dearing and Everett Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 4. More recently, coverage of natural disasters has been prominent in the news. However, as news coverage wanes, so does the general public's interest.



Figure 2.7 Through a variety of antismoking campaigns, the health risks of smoking became a public agenda.

Media scholars who specialize in agenda-setting research study the salience, or relative importance, of an issue and then attempt to understand what causes it to be important. The relative salience of an issue determines its place within the public agenda, which in turn influences public policy creation. Agenda-setting research traces public policy from its roots as an agenda through its promotion in the mass media and finally to its final form as a law or policy.James Dearing and Everett Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 8.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Practitioners of the uses and gratifications theory study the ways the public consumes media. This theory states that consumers use the media to satisfy specific needs or desires. For example, you may enjoy watching a show like *Dancing With the Stars* while simultaneously tweeting about it on Twitter with your friends. Many people use the Internet to seek out entertainment, to find information, to communicate with like-minded individuals, or to pursue self-expression. Each of these uses gratifies a particular need, and the needs determine the way in which media are used. By examining factors of different groups' media choices, researchers can determine the motivations behind media use.Zizi Papacharissi, "Uses and Gratifications," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don Stacks and Michael Salwen (New York: Routledge, 2009), 137.

A typical uses and gratifications study explores the motives for media consumption and the consequences associated with use of that media. By studying how and why people watch *Dancing With the Stars* while using Twitter, scholars suggest people are using the Internet as way to be entertained and to connect with friends. Researchers have identified a number of common motives for media consumption. These include relaxation, social interaction, entertainment, arousal, escape, and a host of interpersonal and social needs. By examining the motives behind the consumption of a particular form of media, researchers can better understand both the reasons for that medium's popularity and the roles that the medium fills in society. A study of the motives behind a given user's interaction with Facebook, for example, could explain the role Facebook takes in society and the reasons for its appeal.

Uses and gratifications theories of media are often applied to contemporary media issues. The analysis of the relationship between media and violence that you read about in preceding sections exemplifies this. Researchers employed the uses and gratifications theory in this case to reveal a nuanced set of circumstances surrounding violent media consumption, as individuals with aggressive tendencies were drawn to violent media.Zizi Papacharissi, "Uses and Gratifications," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don Stacks and Michael Salwen (New York: Routledge, 2009), 140–143.

Symbolic Interactionism

Another commonly used media theory, symbolic interactionism, states that the self is derived from and develops through human interaction. This means the way you act toward someone or something is based on the meaning you have for a person or thing. To effectively communicate, people use symbols with shared cultural meanings. Symbols can be constructed from just about anything, including material goods, education, or even the way people talk. Consequentially, these symbols are instrumental in the development of the self.

This theory helps media researchers better understand the field because of the important role the media plays in creating and propagating shared symbols. Because of the media's power, it can construct symbols on its own. By using symbolic interactionist theory, researchers can look at the ways media affects a society's shared symbols and, in turn, the influence of those symbols on the individual.Cathrine Jansson-Boyd, *Consumer Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 59–62.

One of the ways the media creates and uses cultural symbols to affect an individual's sense of self is advertising. Advertisers work to give certain products a shared cultural meaning to make them desirable. For example, when you see someone driving a BMW, what do you think about that person? You may assume the person is successful or powerful because of the car he or she is driving. Ownership of luxury automobiles signifies membership in a certain socioeconomic class. Equally, technology company Apple has used advertising and public relations to attempt to become a symbol of innovation and nonconformity. Use of an Apple product, therefore, may have a symbolic meaning and may send a particular message about the product's owner.

Media also propagate other noncommercial symbols. National and state flags, religious images, and celebrities gain shared symbolic meanings through their representation in the media.

Spiral of Silence

The spiral of silence theory, which states that those who hold a minority opinion silence themselves to prevent social isolation, explains the role of mass media in the formation and maintenance of dominant opinions. As minority opinions are silenced, the illusion of consensus grows, and so does social pressure to adopt the dominant position. This creates a self-propagating loop in which minority voices are reduced to a minimum and perceived popular opinion sides wholly with the majority opinion. For example, prior to and during World War II, many Germans opposed Adolf Hitler and his policies; however, they kept their opposition silent out of fear of isolation and stigma.

Because the media is one of the most important gauges of public opinion, this theory is often used to explain the interaction between media and public opinion. According to the spiral of silence theory, if the media propagate a particular opinion, then that opinion will effectively silence opposing opinions through an illusion of consensus. This theory relates especially to public polling and its use in the media.Zizi Papacharissi, "Uses and Gratifications," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don Stacks and Michael Salwen (New York: Routledge, 2009), 153–154.

Media Logic

The media logic theory states that common media formats and styles serve as a means of perceiving the world. Today, the deep rooting of media in the cultural conciousness means that media consumers need engage for only a few moments with a particular television program to understand that it is a news show, a comedy, or a reality show. The pervasiveness of these formats means that our culture uses the style and content of these shows as ways to interpret reality. For example, think about a TV news program that

frequently shows heated debates between opposing sides on public policy issues. This style of debate has become a template for handling disagreement to those who consistently watch this type of program.

Media logic affects institutions as well as individuals. The modern televangelist has evolved from the adoption of television-style promotion by religious figures, while the utilization of television in political campaigns has led candidates to consider their physical image as an important part of a campaign.David Altheide and Robert Snow, *Media Worlds in the Postjournalism Era* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 9–11.

Cultivation Analysis

The cultivation analysis theory states that heavy exposure to media causes individuals to develop—or cultivate—an illusory perception of reality based on the most repetitive and consistent messages of a particular medium. This theory most commonly applies to analyses of television because of that medium's uniquely pervasive nature. Under this theory, someone who watches a great deal of television may form a picture of reality that does not correspond to actual life. Televised violent acts, whether those reported on news programs or portrayed on television dramas, for example, greatly outnumber violent acts that most people encounter in their daily lives. Thus, an individual who watches a great deal of television may come to view the world as more violent and dangerous than it actually is.

Cultivation analysis projects involve a number of different areas for research, such as the differences in perception between heavy and light users of media. To apply this theory, the media content that an individual normally watches must be analyzed for various types of messages. Then, researchers must consider the given media consumer's cultural background of individuals to correctly determine other factors that are involved in his or her perception of reality. For example, the socially stabilizing influences of family and peer groups influence children's television viewing and the way they process media messages. If an individual's family or social life plays a major part in her life, the social messages that she receives from these groups may compete with the messages she receives from television.

Key Takeaways

- The now largely discredited direct effects model of media studies assumes that media audiences passively accept media messages and exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages.
- Credible media theories generally do not give as much power to the media, such as the agenda-setting theory, or give a more active role to the media consumer, such as the uses and gratifications theory.
- Other theories focus on specific aspects of media influence, such as the spiral of silence theory's focus on the power of the majority opinion or the symbolic interactionism theory's exploration of shared cultural symbolism.
- Media logic and cultivation analysis theories deal with how media consumers' perceptions of reality can be influenced by media messages.

? Exercise 7.2.1

1. Media theories have a variety of uses and applications. Research one of the following topics and its effect on culture. Examine the topic using at least two of the approaches discussed in this section. Then, write a one-page essay about the topic you've selected.
    - Media bias
    - Internet habits
    - Television's effect on attention span
    - Advertising and self-image
    - Racial stereotyping in film
2. Many of the theories discussed in this section were developed decades ago. Identify how each of these theories can be used today. Do you think these theories are still relevant for modern mass media? Why?

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7.3: Methods of Researching Media Effects

Learning Objectives

- Identify the prominent media research methods.
- Explain the uses of media research methods in a research project.

Media theories provide the framework for approaching questions about media effects ranging from as simple as how 10-year-old boys react to cereal advertisements to as broad as how Internet use affects literacy. Once researchers visualize a project and determine a theoretical framework, they must choose actual research methods. Contemporary research methods are greatly varied and can range from analyzing old newspapers to performing controlled experiments.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research technique that involves analyzing the content of various forms of media. Through content analysis, researchers hope to understand both the people who created the content and the people who consumed it. A typical content analysis project does not require elaborate experiments. Instead, it simply requires access to the appropriate media to analyze, making this type of research an easier and inexpensive alternative to other forms of research involving complex surveys or human subjects.

Content analysis studies require researchers to define what types of media to study. For example, researchers studying violence in the media would need to decide which types of media to analyze, such as television, and the types of formats to examine, such as children's cartoons. The researchers would then need to define the terms used in the study; media violence can be classified according to the characters involved in the violence (strangers, family members, or racial groups), the type of violence (self-inflicted, slapstick, or against others), or the context of the violence (revenge, random, or duty-related). These are just a few of the ways that media violence could be studied with content-analysis techniques.Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Research Techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 23–24.

Archival Research

Any study that analyzes older media must employ archival research, which is a type of research that focuses on reviewing historical documents such as old newspapers and past publications. Old local newspapers are often available on microfilm at local libraries or at the newspaper offices. University libraries generally provide access to archives of national publications such as *The New York Times* or *Time*; publications can also increasingly be found in online databases or on websites.

Older radio programs are available for free or by paid download through a number of online sources. Many television programs and films have also been made available for free download, or for rent or sale through online distributors. Performing an online search for a particular title will reveal the options available.

Resources such as the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) work to archive a number of media sources. One important role of the Internet Archive is website archiving. Internet archives are invaluable for a study of online media because they store websites that have been deleted or changed. These archives have made it possible for Internet content analyses that would have otherwise been impossible.

Surveys

Surveys are ubiquitous in modern life. Questionaires record data on anything from political preferences to personal hygiene habits. Media surveys generally take one of the following two forms.

A descriptive survey aims to find the current state of things, such as public opinion or consumer preferences. In media, descriptive surveys establish television and radio ratings by finding the number of people who watch or listen to particular programs. An analytical survey, however, does more than simply document a current situation. Instead, it attempts to find out why a particular situation exists. Researchers pose questions or hypotheses about media and then conduct analytical surveys to answer these questions. Analytical surveys can determine the relationship between different forms of media consumption and the lifestyles and habits of media consumers.

Surveys can employ either open-ended or closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions require the participant to generate answers in their own words, while closed-ended questions force the participant to select an answer from a list. Although open-

ended questions allow for a greater variety of answers, the results of closed-ended questions are easier to tabulate. Although surveys are useful in media studies, effective use requires keeping their limitations in mind.

Social Role Analysis

As part of child rearing, parents teach their children about social roles. When parents prepare children to attend school for example, they explain the basics of school rules and what is expected of a student to help the youngsters understand the role of students. Like the role of a character in a play, this role carries specific expectations that differentiate school from home. Adults often play a number of different roles as they navigate between their responsibilities as parents, employees, friends, and citizens. Any individual may play a number of roles depending on his or her specific life choices.

Social role analysis of the media involves examining various individuals in the media and analyzing the type of role that each plays. Role analysis research can consider the roles of men, women, children, members of a racial minority, or members any other social group in specific types of media. For example, if the role children play in cartoons is consistently different from the role they play in sitcoms, then certain conclusions might be drawn about both of these formats. Analyzing roles used in media allows researchers to gain a better understanding of the messages that the mass media sends.Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Research Techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 45–48.

Depth Interviews

The depth interview is an anthropological research tool that is also useful in media studies. Depth interviews take surveys one step further by allowing researchers to directly ask a study participant specific questions to gain a fuller understanding of the participant's perceptions and experiences. Depth interviews have been used in research projects that follow newspaper reporters to find out their reasons for reporting certain stories and in projects that attempt to understand the motivations for reading romance novels. Depth interviews can provide a deeper understanding of the media consumption habits of particular groups of people.Susanna Hornig Priest, *Doing Media Research: An Introduction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 16–22.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis involves examining the "styles" used in media and attempting to understand the kinds of messages those styles convey. Media styles refer to form, presentation, composition, use of metaphors, and reasoning structure. Rhetorical analysis reveals the messages not apparent in a strict reading of content. Studies involving rhetorical analysis have focused on media such as advertising to better understand the roles of style and rhetorical devices in media messages.Barrie Gunter, *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 89.

Focus Groups

Like depth interviews, focus groups allow researchers to better understand public responses to media. Unlike a depth interview, however, a focus group allows the participants to establish a group dynamic that more closely resembles that of normal media consumption. In media studies, researchers can employ focus groups to judge the reactions of a group to specific media styles and to content. This can be a valuable means of understanding the reasons for consuming specific types of media.



Figure 2.8. Focus groups are effective ways to obtain a group opinion on media.

Experiments

Media research studies also sometimes use controlled experiments that expose a test group to an experience involving media and measure the effects of that experience. Researchers then compare these measurements to those of a control group that had key elements of the experience removed. For example, reseachers may show one group of children a program with three incidents of cartoon violence and another control group of similar children the same program without the violent incidents. Researchers then ask the children from both groups the same sets of questions, and the results are compared.

Participant Observation

In participant observation, researchers try to become part of the group they are studying. Although this technique is typically associated with anthropological studies in which a researcher lives with members of a particular culture to gain a deeper understanding of their values and lives, it is also used in media research.

Media consumption often takes place in groups. Families or friends gather to watch favorite programs, children may watch Saturday morning cartoons with a group of their peers, and adults may host viewing parties for televised sporting events or awards shows. These groups reveal insights into the role of media in the lives of the public. A researcher might join a group that watches football together and stay with the group for an entire season. By becoming a part of the group, the researcher becomes part of the experiment and can reveal important influences of media on culture.Susanna Hornig Priest, *Doing Media Research: An Introduction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 96–98.

Researchers have studied online role-playing games, such as *World of Warcraft*, in this manner. These games reveal an interesting aspect of group dynamics: Although participants are not in physical proximity, they function as a group within the game. Researchers are able to study these games by playing them. In the book *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity: A World of Warcraft Reader*, a group of researchers discussed the results of their participant observation studies. The studies reveal the surprising depth of culture and unwritten rules that exist in the World of Warcraft universe and give important interpretations of why players pursue the game with such dedication.Hilde Corneliussen and Jill Walker Rettberg, “Introduction: ‘Orc ProfessorLFG,’ or Researching in

Azeroth," in *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity: A World of Warcraft Reader*, ed. Hilde Corneliussen and Jill Walker Rettberg (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008), 6–7.

- Media research methods are the practical procedures for carrying out a research project. These methods include content analysis, surveys, focus groups, experiments, and participant observation.
- Research methods generally involve either test subjects or analysis of media. Methods involving test subjects include surveys, depth interviews, focus groups, and experiments. Analysis of media can include content, style, format, social roles, and archival analysis.

? Exercise 7.3.1

Media research methods offer a variety of procedures for performing a media study. Each of these methods varies in cost; thus, a project with a lower budget would be prohibited from using some of the more costly methods. Consider a project on teen violence and video game use. Then answer the following short-response questions. Each response should be a minimum of one paragraph.

1. Which methods would a research organization with a low budget favor for this project? Why?
2. How might the results of the project differ from those of one with a higher budget?

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7.4: Media Studies Controversies

Learning Objectives

- Explain some of the major objections to specific media theories.
- Identify ways media studies are used to support political opinions.
- Differentiate between proper and improper use of media studies.

Important debates over media theory have questioned the foundations and hence the results of media research. Within academia, theories and research can represent an individual's lifework and livelihood. As a result, issues of tenure and position, rather than issues of truth and objectivity, can sometimes fuel discussion over theories and research.

Problems with Methodology and Theory

Although the use of advanced methodologies can resolve many of the questions raised about various theories, the fact remains that the use of these theories in public debate generally follows a broader understanding. For example, if a hypothetical study found that convicted violent offenders had aggressive feelings after playing the video game *Mortal Kombat*, many would take this as proof that video games cause violent acts without considering other possible explanations. Often, the nuances of these studies are lost when they enter the public arena.

Active versus Passive Audience

A significant division among media studies theorists is the belief that audiences are passive or active. A passive audience, in the most extreme statement of this position, passively accepts the messages that media send it. An active audience, on the other hand, is fully aware of media messages and makes informed decisions about how to process and interact with media. Newer trends in media studies have attempted to develop a more complex view of media audiences than the active versus passive debate affords, but in the public sphere, this opposition frames many of the debates about media influence.Robert Heath and Jennings Bryant, *Human Communication Theory and Research: Concepts, Contexts, and Challenges* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), 385–386.

Arguments against Agenda-Setting Theory

A number of criticisms have dogged agenda-setting theory. Chief among these is that agenda-setting studies are unable to prove cause and effect; essentially, no one has truly shown that the media agenda sets the public agenda and not the other way around. An agenda-setting study could connect the prevalence of a topic in the media with later changes in public policy and may conclude that the media set this agenda. However, policy makers and lobbyists often conduct public relations efforts to encourage the creation of certain policies. In addition, public concern over issues generates media coverage as well, making it difficult to tell if the media are responding to public desire for coverage of an issue or if they are pushing an issue on their own agenda.Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo, "Prospects for Agenda-Setting Research in the 21st Century," in *Topical Issues in Communications and Media Research*, ed. Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2005), 40–41.

Arguments against Uses and Gratifications Theory

The general presuppositions of the uses and gratifications theory have drawn criticism. By assuming that media fulfill a functional purpose in an individual's life, the uses and gratifications theory implicitly justifies and reaffirms the functional place of media in the public sphere; critics say that people do not always use media to fulfill a function. They ask whether unconscious motivations or social rituals might be at play. Furthermore, because it focuses on personal, psychological aspects of media, the theory cannot question whether media are artificially imposed on an indivdual. Studies involving the uses and gratifications theory are often sound methodologically, but the overall assumptions of the studies are left unquestioned.Lawrence Grossberg and others, *Mediamaking: Mass Media in a Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 266–267.

Arguments against Spiral of Silence Theory

Although many regard the spiral of silence theory as useful when applying its broadest principles, it is weak when dealing with specifics. For example, the phenomenon of the spiral of silence is most visible in individuals who are fearful of social isolation.

Those who are less fearful are less likely to be silent if public opinion turns against them. Nonconformists contradict the claims of the spiral of silence theory.

Critics have also pointed out that the spiral of silence theory relies heavily on the values of various cultural groups. A public opinion trend in favor of gun control may not silence the consensus within National Rifle Association meetings. Every individual is a part of a larger social group with specific values. Although these values may differ from widespread public opinion, individuals need not fear social isolation within their particular social group.John Gastil, *Political Communication and Deliberation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 61–62.

Arguments against Cultivation Analysis Theory

Critics have faulted cultivation analysis theory for relying too heavily on a broad definition of violence. Detractors argue that because violence means different things to different subgroups and individuals, any claim that a clear message of violence could be understood in the same way by an entire culture is false. This critique would necessarily extend to other studies involving cultivation analysis. Different people understand media messages in varying ways, so broad claims can be problematic. Cultivation analysis is still an important part of media studies, but critics have questioned its unqualified validity as a theory.James Shanahan and Michael Morgan, *Television and its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 59–60.

Politics and Media Studies

Media theories and studies afford a variety of perspectives. When proponents of a particular view employ those theories and studies, however, they are often oversimplified and can result in contradictory claims. In fact, when politicians and others employ media studies to validate a political perspective, this is a common result.

Media Bias

A good example of the ways that media can bolster political opinion is through coverage, which leads to the debate over media bias. One 1985 study found that journalists were more likely to hold liberal views than were members of the public. Over the years, many have cited this study to support the opinion that the media holds a liberal bias. However, another study found that between the years of 1948 and 1990, 78 percent of newspaper presidential endorsements were for Republicans.Ralph Hanson, *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009), 101–102.

Media favoritism again became a source of contention during the 2008 presidential race. A random sampling of campaign coverage in the run-up to the election found that 82 percent of stories featured Barack Obama, while only 52 percent discussed John McCain.Chuck Raasch, “Media Bias Aside, Obama’s Trip an Important Test,” *USA Today*, July 24, 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/columnist/raasch/2008-07-24-newpolitics_N.htm. Allegations that the media favored Obama seemed to bolster the idea of a liberal bias. But other studies belied this belief. Research conducted during the election showed that favorable media coverage of Obama occurred only after his poll numbers rose, hinting that the media were reacting to public opinion rather than attempting to influence it.Reuters, “Despite Republican Complaints, Media Bias Largely Missing From US Campaign: Study,” *Canada.com*, November 6, 2008, http://www.canada.com/vancouversun/n...5-57a0e0c3a38f.



Figure 2.9 Allegations of media bias are a recurring theme in political debates.

Media Decency

Decency standards in media have long been an issue, and they continue to change in ways that are not necessarily predictable. Once banned in the United States for obscenity, James Joyce's *Ulysses* is now considered a classic of modern literature, while many schools have banned children's classic *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for its use of ethnic slurs. Because of the regulatory powers that government possesses over the media, decency is also an inherently political issue. As media studies have progressed, they have increasingly appeared in the debates over decency standards. Although media studies cannot prove a word or image is indecent, they can help discern the impact of that word or image and, thus, greatly influence the debate.

Organizations or figures with stated goals often use media studies to support those aims. For example, the Parents Television Council reported on a study that compared the ratio of comments about nonmarital sex to comments about marital sex during the hours of 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. The study employed content analysis to come up with specific figures; however, the Parents Television Council then used those findings to make broad statements, such as "the institution of marriage is regularly mocked and denigrated."Melissa Rayworth, "TV Decency Standards Challenge Parents," *Cape Cod Times*, August 10, 2008, www.capecodonline.com/apps/pb...LIFE/808100317. Because content analysis does not analyze the effect on audiences or analyze how material is presented, it does not offer a scientific way to judge whether a comment is mocking and denigrating marriage, so such interpretations are arguably unsupported by the research. For example, researchers performing a content analysis by documenting the amount of sex or violence on television are not analyzing how this content is interpreted by the audience. They are simply noting the number of instances. Equally, partisan groups can use a number of different linguistic turns to make media studies fit their agenda.

Media studies involving violence, pornography, and profanity are inherently politically charged, and politicians have also conducted their own media studies. In 2001, for example, a Senate bill aimed at Internet decency that had little support in Congress came to the floor. One of the sponsoring senators attempted to increase interest by bringing to the Senate floor a file full of some of the most egregious pornographic images he could find on the Internet. The bill passed 84 to 16.Philip Elmer-Dewitt, "On a Screen Near You," *Time*, June 24, 2001, www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101950703-134361,00.html.

Jack Thompson versus Violent Video Games

One of the most outspoken critics of violent video games is the now-disbarred lawyer Jack Thompson. Despite questionable use of media research, Thompson has made many claims referencing research. In an interview with *CBS News*, Thompson stated that "hundreds of studies" existed that proved the link between violent video games and real violence. Later in the interview, he listed increasing school murder statistics as proof of the effects of violent video games.William Vitka, "Gamespeak: Jack Thompson," GameCore, *CBS News*, February 25, 2005, www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/02/24/tech/gamecore/main676446.shtml. In light of the media effects theories elucidated in this chapter, Thompson was obviously not being honest about the findings of video game–violence research and was making claims that no media effects scholar could confidently make.

Thompson initiated several lawsuits against *Grand Theft Auto* video game developer Take 2 Interactive, claiming that the company should be held liable for encouraging violent actions by minors. His lawsuits were thrown out of court, and he eventually came to a settlement with Take 2 Interactive—who had countersued—to drop all litigation.K. C. Jones, "Grand Theft Auto Company Settles With Jack Thompson," *InformationWeek*, April 20, 2007, www.informationweek.com/news/global-cio/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=199200271. Thompson's frivolous use of the legal system caused the state of Alabama to revoke his license to practice law in 2005, and, in 2008, the Florida Supreme Court disbarred him for life.Mark Hefflinger, "Controversial Game Lawsuit Attorney Jack Thompson Disbarred," *Digital Media Wire*, September 26, 2008, www.dmwmedia.com/news/2008/09...pson-disbarred.

Jack Thompson's actions may seem extreme, but he represents a common pattern of media study misrepresentation. Pundits, social reformers, and politicians frequently use the results of media studies to support their agenda without regard for accuracy. The use of media research to lend credence to a political opinion is widespread even as the public struggles to understand the effects of new media on culture.

Media Consolidation

Although media consolidation will be discussed in more depth in later chapters, the topic's intersection with media studies results deserves a place here. Media consolidation occurs when large media companies buy up smaller media outlets to create giant

conglomerates. Some scholars predict that a handful of companies will soon control most of the world's media. Although government regulation has historically stymied this trend in the United States by prohibiting ownership of a large number of media outlets, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has loosened many of the restrictions on large media companies in recent years.

Media studies often prove vital to decisions regarding media consolidation. These studies measure the impact that consolidation has had on the media's public role and on the content of local media outlets to compare it with that of conglomerate-owned outlets. The findings often vary depending on the group conducting the test. Sometimes tests are ignored entirely.

In 2003, the FCC loosened restrictions on owning multiple media outlets in the same city, citing studies that the agency had developed to weigh the influence of particular media outlets such as newspapers and television stations.Frank Ahrens, "FCC Eases Media Ownership Rules," *Washington Post*, June 3, 2003, www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A5555-2003Jun2. In 2006, however, reports surfaced that a key study had been discarded during the 2003 decision. The study showed an increase in time allocated for news when TV stations were owned locally, thus raising questions about whether media consolidation was a good thing for local news.Associated Press, "Powell Denies Seeing Media Ownership Study," *MSNBC*, September 15, 2006, http://msnbc.msn.com/id/14850729/.

- Audience interpretation is vital to media studies. Media theories generally fall between the active and passive audience interpretations. Agenda-setting theory favors the passive audience interpretation, and consequently must prove that the public is affected by media agendas. The uses and gratifications theory favors the active audience, and consequently justifies the place of media in the public sphere.
- In politics, media studies are often used to support various opinions. Among the more prominent media studies employed are those that deal with media bias, violence in the media, and indecency.
- The use of media studies in public debate has led to subjective studies that have a predetermined outcome. Many studies conducted by special interest groups use definitions that favor their perspectives. Politicians often copy the style, rather than the substance, of a media study in an attempt to give authority to their points of view.

? Exercise 7.4.1

Media studies are often used to support specific opinions, regardless of whether their results justify such a use. Studies are also conducted with predetermined outcomes that support a specific view. With this in mind, answer the following short-response questions. Each response should be a minimum of one paragraph.

1. How are media studies used to support political opinions? Give two examples.
2. What kind of guidelines should be used to ensure clear and objective use of media studies?
3. Identify weaknesses of popular media theories discussed in this section.

? End-of-Chapter Assessments

Review Questions

1. Questions for Section 2.1
    1. List three historical events that have relied on propaganda.
    2. Provide three examples of cultural messages that the media send.
    3. How have new media affected older forms of media?
2. Questions for Section 2.2
    1. How does agenda-setting theory differ from direct effects theory?
    2. Use the spiral of silence to explain an actual lapse in media coverage.
    3. Why would uses and gratifications theory be an appropriate theory for a study of Internet purchasing habits?
3. Questions for Section 2.3
    1. Name the different types of media analysis techniques and explain their uses.
    2. Explain the differences among a survey, a depth interview, and a focus group.
    3. What resources would be important for a project analyzing the historical representation of women in advertising?

4. Questions for Section 2.4

1. Explain the opposition between theories of passive and active media audiences.
2. How are media studies commonly misused to support political opinions?
3. How might media studies be used in a study on indecency?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. The media have become an ever-increasing part of modern life. How do you think the media and their messages have affected you personally?
2. Media studies attempt to understand the role that the media play in culture and in individual lives. Given the criticisms of particular media theories, what do you think the limitations of media studies are? Consider the media theories discussed in this chapter. Which ones do you find the most convincing and why? Which ones do you find least convincing?
3. Among the methods used to analyze audiences, which do you think would guarantee the most accurate results? How does this affect your opinion of studies that use other results?

Career Connection

Media studies are used in a variety of professions and capacities. These range from university researchers to small-time music groups that want to assess their online presence. A number of online research tools exist that can help organizations and individuals learn more about the effect of media on important issues and topics.

List two or three prospective careers and think of one way that media studies could be beneficial in each. Search for online media research tools that would assist you in a media research project involving your chosen careers. Answer the following questions:

- What kind of project would be beneficial to you in this field?
- How would you set up the project to ensure usable and accurate results?
- How would you present the results of your studies to clients, employees, and investors?

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7.5: Media Literacy and Media Studies Research



bell hooks at a speaking engagement, from hooks' own Flickr page. Public domain.

"Understanding knowledge as an essential element of love is vital because we are bombarded daily with messages that tell us love is about mystery, about that which cannot be known. We see movies in which people are represented as being in love who never talk with one another, who fall into bed without ever discussing their bodies, their sexual needs, their likes and dislikes. Indeed, the message is received from the mass media is that knowledge makes love less compelling; that it is ignorance that gives love its erotic and transgressive edge. These messages are brought to us by profiteering producers who have no clue about the art of loving, who substitute their mystified visions because they do not really know how to genuinely portray loving interaction." — bell hooks from her book *All About Love: New Visions*

The Academic Approach to Studying the Mass Media

If you have been reading the chapters of this text in order, by this point you will be aware of the powerful role the mass media play in society, but you may not yet question whether society benefits from this arrangement. In general, the mass media could do a better job of representing all sorts of groups and group cultures. The mass media could also represent abstract concepts like love, trust and greed in more meaningful ways. This is not to say that the mass media have failed in this regard, but there is much room for improvement.

As active audience members, as hybrid producer-users or "produsers" (to use a term coined by Axel Bruns), you must not only be selective but also critical of what you consume. Whether you become media professionals or not, it will ultimately be your job as media consumers to remake the mass media in ways that better represent the depth of human experience.

Whether your interest is a religion, a fandom, or an abstract concept like love (one of the greatest of abstractions), you have the power to participate in the media production redefining how others understand it.

No, this is not a book about love. Yes, love and related concepts are commodified in the mass media; however, the disruption that has echoed in political spheres and often in the ways family and cultural group members speak to one another about politics also opens up space for critical thinking. That is, the same disruption described in Chapter 2 that allows for social upheaval also allows for a time of reflection and critical thinking about how society and its media function.

This chapter gives you some tools developed by mass communication scholars to develop your critical eye when viewing messages as products in the mass media. If massive numbers of "produsers" can reshape the media landscape, we have to re-think the role of mass media professionals. Assisting people in the process of meaning-making — that is, making mass media *with* audiences instead of *for* them, and aiding them in their own communication efforts — could open up a new purpose and new industries for those who are mentally prepared and daring enough to take the lead.

This chapter defines "media literacy" and touches on some key mass communication theories that are absolutely *not* meant to be left to molder in the digital cloud where this text"book" lives. Take these theories out, apply them and see how they work. Find out how useful they can be and what their limitations are.

This text presents an image of entire societies and cultures swimming in a sea of media. Consider these concepts your first set of snorkel and swim-fins.

Media Literacy Defined

Media literacy is a term describing media consumers' understanding of how mass media work. It includes knowing where different types of information can be found, how best to evaluate information, who owns the major mass media platforms, how messages are produced, and how they are framed to suit various interests.

In a global society that gets most of its information through digital networks, it is incredibly important to know how and by whom media messages are made so that as consumers we can discern how the mass media are being used to shape our opinions. We can reply to or comment on messages in the mass media, or we can demand a seat at the table when messages are being constructed. This is the nature of participatory media outlined in the previous chapter. Being media literate gives us the tools to participate well and with purpose.

It is important to consider your role in contributing directly to mass media content. Your contributions to cultural trends and social change in the mass media can sometimes happen without your knowledge. If you post regularly to Facebook or other social media platforms, your data are being aggregated, and that information is used by advertisers, researchers, and news services to find out what you like and what you *are like*, as well as to create ads and political messages tailored just for you.

You are more than your preferences and the media you consume. You are encouraged to play an active role in shaping your digital identity beyond the one that has already been created for you.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is media literacy put into action. Besides contributing to the creation of meaning by making your own mass media messages (perhaps in collaboration with professionals), you can ask who owns major mass media corporations. Scholars have found that more than half of the mass media channels available to mass audiences in America are owned by only five corporations or firms.

My own research, conducted with two research partners in graduate school, has shown that just by making people aware of the nature of media ownership, you can encourage them to be skeptical of mass media content.

This text has already established that mass communication is what makes society in the physical world work. Information, often in the form of messages in the mass media, permeates institutional interactions and passes between all of us in our homes and schools and businesses. The information conveyed in the mass media gets interpreted in organizational, group and interpersonal communication contexts. These systems influence each other, but mass media messages tend to envelop and permeate other forms of communication. Thus, if you learn to be skeptical of the information you receive in the mass media, you learn how to critique the whole global social system.

Critique this Book

Reading closely, you will have undoubtedly found value judgments in this text already. You may be inclined to assign political values to this text in our hyper-partisan cultural environment. You are welcome to do this. You are encouraged to do this. You must think critically about the cultural values expressed not only in this text but also in your other textbooks and in the history and literature you read.

But you also must think critically about your preferred media outlets. Where do they get their information from? Who owns them? No single revelation about the mass media will tell you everything you need to know. You have to begin to see nuance and to think for yourself what aspects of the mass media matter most to you, what things you think should change, how you might change them, and what you can live with.

It is part of the responsibility of citizens now to critique messages that come to us via mass media, as well as messages from leaders who bypass mass media gatekeepers and fact checkers. It is also a sound career strategy for those who go into the mass communication field to learn to be able to critique messages, messengers and owners in the corporate mass media field of work and play. To know where the mass media industry is headed, you must be able to think critically about where it comes from.

Much of the rest of this book breaks down different mass media channels and looks briefly at the history of how each came to be, what and whom each channel serves, and how convergence in a digitally networked society might affect the future of each medium. This text also returns several times to "big picture" questions about the dynamic relationship between media and society as seen from the perspective of the various mass communication channels and platforms.

The Dichotomy Between the Media and the "Real World"

For nearly the dozenth time in this text already, your author has referenced a "dynamic." The mass media reflect our social norms and expectations and, dynamically, they shape our norms and expectations.

To the extent they are shaped by mass media, our perceptions of reality are very much artificial — but not entirely so. How artificial is too artificial? Different individuals and different cultures differ in the amount of nonsense they can tolerate.

The real challenge to us as young media professionals and scholars is to try to determine what is artificial in the vast array of messages delivered to us at all times by the mass media. One of the best ways to do this is to get off of social media platforms and talk to people in person. We should also dig a bit into the information we consume and ask, "How do they know?" Whenever a message comes to us from a mass media outlet or from a friend's social media post, the media literate individual seeks to know what underlies each claim.

The question is not whether you believe it. The question is: On what grounds is a message in the mass media or in social media believable?

Now that people are constantly using technology and even wearing it, it is becoming more difficult to separate messages mediated by professionals, who pledge ethically to adhere to disseminating factual information (such as most journalists), from poorly-supported, opinion-only content or outright misinformation, which may be spread far and wide by friends and family.

We are living in a media age where we may not trust our own family members' social media posts. Things they think are important might not only be unimportant to us, they might be distasteful or even wrong. There are real-world consequences to sharing misinformation on social media platforms. Question the sources' sources. Talk to people in tangible spaces apart from social media platforms, and you can learn to see what is supported by fact in the physical world and its digital networks.

The Bad Dynamic

Your media choices matter. In the network society, when mass media content is ubiquitous on mobile phones and is often projected into public spaces, it can be difficult to differentiate between your independent preferences and the opinions you are encouraged to carry by advertisers who constantly bombard you.

Without human interaction outside of the deluge of electronic information, it can be nearly impossible to figure out for yourself if what you like is a response to the quality of the media content or if you are responding to carefully targeted marketing campaigns.



Raahil Djhruva reached out gently across the generational divide and helped a community member learn how to use Skype so he could communicate with his daughter. Dhruva, a junior at Queens University of Charlotte from London, England, called the experience "an emotional moment." Media literacy is also about teaching people how to use information and communication technologies to reach out to one another. Photo by Knight Foundation, Knight-Crane Convergence Lab, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

The system of checks and balances in which you can compare your real life experiences to what you see and hear in the mass media may break down. A pessimistic view is that we may enter a constant state of depression on a social level because we are cognitively incapable of comprehending all of the information presented to us and we lack ways of taking regular "reality checks."

Feelings of isolation and inadequacy coupled with cognitive overload create the potential for a host of social issues. Additionally, the images we see in ads and the perfected versions of themselves people present on social media usually do not reflect applied critical thinking.

The "bad dynamic" that comes into play is one where glossy identities are carefully constructed and protected while our real identities rapidly disintegrate. We may establish a society where many people have identity issues, and those issues are constantly worsening. It may seem at times as though we are headed for a massive collective mental breakdown.

What good is media literacy? Thinking critically about the mass media and content spread on social media helps us critique constructed images and accept our own shortcomings. If we look for ways to relate to one another besides our overlapping common

culture interests, we may find deeper connections are possible. We can share imperfections and tackle doubts, but only if we acknowledge them in our media world first.

What follows are a set of mass communication theories arrived at through the analysis of facts and data by thousands of scholars over the course of nearly 100 years. As an academic field, mass communication is young, but there are several theories, or guiding abstractions, that can help us to see how our society is structured and what roles the mass media play in society at all levels.

Critical Media Theory

There are many critical theorists among mass communication scholars. They work to develop better analytical theories that teach us how to analyze messages in media systems and the mass media and help us to discuss with clarity what is beneficial and what is harmful to society.

Academic work is about digging deep. Scholars will often analyze one medium at one period in time to explain how certain groups or ideologies are depicted.

Marxist critical theory questions the hierarchical organization of society — who controls the means of production and whether that control benefits society or only small groups of people. Every society has and needs leaders, and one of the most important functions of society is to manage a functioning economy. At question in Marxist critical thought is how the rules of each economy, including the global economy, are set up. Do they benefit most people? Do they allow for merit to be rewarded? Do they create a system of fair competition? Are they set up for collaboration and mutual benefit?

Most scholars who apply critical theoretical models would hesitate to call themselves Marxists. Marx was both a scholar and a revolutionary, a term which academics rarely self-apply. Most Marxist critical thinkers suggest changes that society could make to be more inclusive and fair for a greater number of people, but what is fair will always be debated. There is no single line of Marxist thought. There is a small number who demand complete change in the global economic system, and there are thousands of critical theorists calling for more narrow or specific changes based on their observations in their areas of expertise — not just mass media analysis but all kinds of social analysis.

Historically, Marxist thought has been employed by dictators, often using mass media channels, to take power and often to wield it in horrendous ways. Marxist thought also guides the reasoning of some mainstream economists who help manage social democracies, which historically garner more good will than dictatorships. Scholars working with the critical theoretical point of view often note broad ways for society to improve as well as practical solutions that might help (although getting leaders to listen is another matter). Making cogent arguments and convincing people to hear them are very different things.

That said, ideas about questioning hierarchies and asking for whom social systems really work are still central to modern critical theory. This is what Marxist critique in media studies is all about: looking at symbols and underlying messages in all forms of media and discerning what purposes they serve, and asking whether they represent exploitation, corruption or any other social ill often found in closed hierarchies.

Symbolic Interactionism

Another critical theoretical perspective is **symbolic interactionism**. The general idea comes from George Herbert Mead and suggests that people assign symbolic meaning to all sorts of phenomena around them. Our behavior is guided and influenced by our perceptions of reality and the symbols around us.

Mass media extend *and* limit our senses. When our senses are extended, we can become overwhelmed by the amount of information coming in, so we look for symbols, and we categorize ideas according to those symbols to make the messages easier to understand.

We sometimes apply the symbols ourselves, but in many (or even most) cases, the people editing messages in the mass media purposefully use symbols as a shorthand way of communicating. Not everyone understands every symbol or perceives them the same way. Symbols have a cultural context, but this is not much of a limiting factor in American society where there is a vast shared common culture and targeted marketing can tailor which images to deliver to which individuals.

You are encouraged to think critically about the symbols you see and ask whether they are meant to manipulate you. We will not stop using symbols in communication; however, if you ask, “Why am I being shown this symbol at this time,” you can take a practical step in critically analyzing media.

An example would probably help.

When asked to come up with an advertising campaign, college students often select a familiar category of beverage: energy drinks. RedBull uses the symbol of wings to show that an energy drink can pick you up and help you to move more quickly through your work. You can fly where you had stumbled. But that is not the only reason associate wings with Red Bull. Wings are a symbol of angels, saviors, and other powerful beings. If an individual has reservations about consuming something that may be unhealthy, moral symbolism and images of power are designed to subconscious guilt or misgivings.

It is up to you to critique images in the mass media as you see fit, but you should develop the skill and practice applying it.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda setting is one of the most simple mass communication theories to understand, and it is one of the most widely cited.

It argues that the mass media tell us what to think about. In other words, the mass media help people to set their own agendas.

The idea is not that mass media companies come up with a specific agenda and then preach it to the masses; rather, mass media outlets learn what people are interested in and find similar topics based on what has been learned in the past. Then, the messages that appear in the mass media tell audiences what topics they should care about and how to prioritize them.

This is a dynamic process, and there is no evidence of a singular media agenda. All one needs to do is to flip through cable television news channels to see vastly different points of view presented to mass audiences at all times.

Instead, agenda setting highlights certain topics and stories and those topics become the public's agenda based not only on what appears in the mass media but what people accept, care about and share more widely.

Messages in the mass media may or may not succeed in directing us how or what to think, but with great success, they tell us what we should be thinking and talking *about*.

The examples are easy to find. Many mass media outlets talked more about Ebola during October of 2014 rather than the midterm elections. People came to discuss Ebola more often than the elections despite the fact that the election might have a more direct effect on them than Ebola ever would. The assumption may be that professionals in the mass media are pushing an agenda about a scary world, but in most instances, they are promoting news they know people care about based on previous responses to similar topics.

For an agenda to be set, messages have to appear in the mass media, and they have to be accepted by massive numbers of audience members. The acceptance of messages in the mass media is known as **salience**. Here is how agenda setting theory works: Various mass media outlets have agendas for coverage that they develop. It may take years for a film company to develop a brand. News organizations change their coverage agenda several times a day. An agenda is just a list of issues a media outlet wants to discuss and a prioritization of those issues.

Research has shown thousands of times that those agendas are passed on to audiences. This is tested by surveying people about what issues they think are important and comparing that list to the issues that had been in the news and entertainment media in the weeks before taking the survey. The topics and the relative levels of priority are often (but not always) passed along.

Agenda setting still works even as the processes of de-massification continues, but the influence of mass media outlets may be diminishing. The theory is based on the assumption that there are mass audiences all consuming similar messages, but mass audiences are diminishing. That said, the messages people share on social media between one another often originate in mass media channels.

Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping theory describes a practice where a person acts as a filter, deciding what information will be disseminated for public consumption via the mass media. A good example is an editor in a news organization looking at many stories from a newswire.

Newswires put out hundreds of stories per day. The same newspapers that publish wire stories from other areas may contribute stories to the newswire if something interesting to a broader audience should occur. Only a handful of wire stories make it into a TV news broadcast, onto a newspaper's website or into the paper itself.



Why online gatekeepers rarely succeed by Lars K. Jensen, CCBY. Source: Flikr.

In television news, producers act as primary gatekeepers. Only a dozen or so national and international news stories make it into the average big city daily newspaper, where the task falls to an editor. The person with the job of selecting and editing wire stories for a news organization has to decide which news stories are noteworthy to the local audience. The practice started in the 19th century with the marriage of the telegraph to the newspaper, and it continues as text, images, video and information graphics are shared through digital networks.

The way gatekeeping works has changed significantly over the past two centuries. Now, we often think of gatekeepers guarding a gate with no fences because on the internet anyone can post almost anything. Mass media news outlets are no longer people's only major source of news and information about the world. Social media platforms carry both messages produced by both mass media outlets and individuals free to share almost whatever they like online. Of course, sharing something online does not guarantee it will be popular. There are plenty of YouTube videos with very few views.

And where there are mass audiences, there is still plenty of gatekeeping going on. Humans do much of the work planning what goes into major newspapers and network news broadcasts as well as entertainment products for that matter.

On social media platforms and in search engine content, however, the task is increasingly managed by algorithms — sets of procedures or rules for computers to follow.

In the future, we expect to see fewer human gatekeepers and more gatekeeping work done by recommendation engines and the like. You are unaware of the full extent of Netflix's available content because you only see what your preferences suggest you should see. The same is true for Google searches and advertisements pulled from databases filled with vastly different ads designed to target different individuals at precisely the right time.

There is also a new theory to be aware of that concerns the flip-side of gatekeeping. "Gatewatching" describes people who consume all sorts of news and other information and who stay current with new information as it arrives. It is as though they are watching professionally produced media messages come out of the gate and then almost immediately these media consumers post links to Reddit, Twitter, Facebook or other social linking sites and social media platforms.

Gatewatching is when someone takes a message already published, by professionals or amateurs (but more often by professionals working for mass media outlets), and shares it for others to see. It is not uncommon on Reddit to see stories from the national and international media ranked alongside funny cat videos and random thoughts people had in the shower. On the one hand, putting the power of gatewatching in the hands of users is a way for people to set agendas for one another. On the other hand, information-as-popularity-contest can promote biased views and can shut out not just what is politically unpopular but what people consider to be boring, which severely narrows the scope of discussion.

Try to consume mass media *or* social media for a day without seeing or hearing about pop music stars, Kardashians, major sports figures or odd news from far-flung places. It is a challenge, even if you tailor your social media experience to avoid trending topics.

Framing Theory

Framing is a basic mass communication theory with widespread implications. It suggests that the way a news organization (or an entertainment producer, for that matter) frames a story is purposeful and meaningful and can influence how people think about the topic. A **news frame** refers to the way a story is presented including which sources and facts are selected as well as the tone the story or message takes.

An example is the period leading up to a war. If the United States has plans to go to war, it can be framed as a risky proposition, a patriotic endeavor or a morally righteous thing to do.

For any major news story, there are usually a few dominant frames that emerge. The author of this text was a television reporter at the time of the buildup to the Iraq war, and our station framed the issue as a matter of patriotism. There were patriots and there

were protestors. Our station built a "Wall of Heroes" to display photos of marines, soldiers, airmen and sailors killed in action. While any given story about the buildup to the Iraq war might have been objective, the decision to build a display wall framed our coverage in a certain way. The display remained on view for approximately 18 months. The station then stopped keeping track in that highly visible, demonstrably patriotic way, even though the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq continued for 15 more years on a reduced scale.

Whether you agree or disagree with the idea of remembering those who died in Iraq through local television news broadcast tributes, the point is that stories are framed by *how* they are covered. It matters what sources are selected for news stories and which sources are left out. It matters which terms are used and how prevalent they are. Framing analyses delve into news content to identify various themes and to show which ones receive preferential treatment.

Surveys of news and entertainment media consumers will reflect which frames were most salient; that is, not only which stories but also which frames stay in the minds of audience members.

Limited Effects Paradigm

A paradigm is a collection of theories from the social sciences, which are themselves collections of facts supporting an abstract idea meant to explain the phenomena of human behavior. A theory is supported by empirical facts. It's not the same as when your buddy shotguns three beers and says "You know…I have a *theory*." Social scientific theories are meant to be big ideas that help predict behavior or the results of certain behaviors.

In the field of mass communication, the limited effects paradigm is so-called because there are different kinds of theory relating to different media that all show the same thing: It is a complicated task to tie one set of messages to massive shifts in human behavior. Even small shifts in behavior like deciding to purchase one smartphone over another are only partially influenced by messages in the mass media. There are simply too many other factors influencing behavior to say that a certain set of mass media messages *caused* behaviors across a mass audience.

Influence is another matter. The mass media work in tandem with other social stimuli to influence all sorts of behavior. If there were no influence, there would be no reason for mass media advertising or government propaganda. It is because they work that both are a constant presence in the global mass media environment. At question is how much influence certain messages can have and under what conditions is the influence stronger or weaker.

The limited effects paradigm started as a response to theories such as the hypodermic needle theory. After Germany lost World War I, mass communication was just starting to emerge as its own discipline. One of the first theories American scholars of mass communication had was that propaganda infects a population like a needle injecting a viable virus into the body.

Scholars thought that propaganda turned Germany into an imperialistic, nationalistic country (that is, Nazi Germany), but propaganda never works that easily. When the Nazi Party unified the country between World War I and World War II, a large portion of the population, welcomed the shift in social policy, despite the accompanying racism and violence. It did not take as much convincing for many Germans, as many in the aftermath of WWII and the Holocaust would like to think. Using many kinds of authority, the Nazis committed atrocities. Mass communication enabled it, but the theory that propaganda could, more or less by itself, *create* that kind of situation has not held true. There were social weaknesses and social structures in place that paved the way for the Nazis, who could not have risen to power by media influence alone.

This does not mean that the mass media have no effects. It would not make sense to argue that communication permeates society and then to suggest that it has little to no effect on people. What the limited effects paradigm suggests instead is that information does not sway people as often as it is assimilated into existing patterns of thought. And those patterns of thought are shaped by all sorts of social forces, not just mass media campaigns. To reiterate, other social forces at play include religion, family, education, economic status, health, crime and incarceration.

Changing people's minds is difficult. Motivating behavior is difficult, and there are many variables guiding human behavior. Thus, the core concept is that the mass media have **limited effects** on society. Small effects are measured in mass communication studies all the time, and influencing thoughts is generally understood to be easier than influencing behavior.

Limited Capacity Processing Model

The Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Message Processing (LC4MP), which we'll call the **Limited Capacity Model** for short, is a theory that states that our cognitive abilities are limited, so we are unable to process all of the information that we see, hear and read.

Since we cannot perceive and understand everything, parts of our brain act as filters that either disregard information, very rapidly process it according to our long-held assumptions, or force us to pay attention to it. We can force ourselves to pay attention to information as well, but it is difficult (which you might notice while reading textbooks).

The theory goes deeper than this and explains *how* we process information when we do attend to it. The three stages are encoding, storage and retrieval.

Encoding is when you voluntarily or involuntarily pay attention to a message and its underlying symbols.

Once attention is paid, a message can be **stored**, or, recorded in our memories. Not all messages are easily **retrieved**, or, recalled when we wish to remember them.

Some are retrievable only in part, or they may be altered in the storage and retrieval process. There are voluntary and involuntary types of encoding, and what we store and how we store it has a lot to do with what is already in our minds. It is generally easier to store something when it connects to familiar thoughts.

All of this amounts to a quantitative approach to studying memory in the context of mass media messages. It does not presume effects.

In fact, since a message has to be encoded, stored and retrieved before it can influence behavior, the limited capacity model is *part of* what explains the limited effects model.

Even if we had all the useful information in the world, our brains could not store and use it all. Thus, even the best advertisements, political campaigns and in-depth news documentaries are up against the limits of our minds.

Keep this in mind as you think critically about the messages you see and share.

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7.6: Advertising, Public Relations and Propaganda



Don Draper seeing a ghost. Photo illustration by Bill Strain, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

"What you call love was invented by guys like me to sell nylons." — Don Draper, fictional advertising executive from the AMC series *Mad Men*

Think Critically about Where Persuasion Becomes Propaganda

Advertising is a relatively straightforward process, right? Companies develop brands and specific products they want to sell. They need to make consumers aware of their brands, products and those products' features, so they develop creative campaigns to promote them and often pay ad agencies to do the creative work and place the ads in front of mass audiences. The basic definition of **advertising** is a message or group of messages designed with three intentions: to raise awareness in the population about brands, products and services; to encourage consumers to make purchases; and, ultimately, to inspire people to advocate for their favorite brands. A **brand advocate** is someone who is so supportive of a product or service that they publicly encourage others to buy it. There are paid brand advocates, of course, but in a networked communication environment, even unpaid individuals with modest followings can become **influencers** — people who promote products on their social media streams. Consumers who have been so successfully persuaded to purchase and enjoy a product that they try to persuade others to buy it too extend the reach of advertising potentially exponentially.

A **company** is a business entity that produces several types of product, whereas a **brand** is a term used to label a specific product or a limited family of products. It is important to differentiate between the two. For example, PepsiCo owns the Pepsi brand but also Frito Lay, Gatorade and Quaker, among others. Under the Pepsi brand, there are several products such as Diet Pepsi, Pepsi Wild Cherry and many other variations around the world. Advertising most often focuses on brands and products rather than the companies and large corporations that own them.

As this chapter progresses, it defines the core concept of advertising in more depth. Then, it discusses the history of advertising. It defines two general strategies or approaches known as "above-the-line" and "below-the-line" advertising before examining in detail the "advertising funnel," or "purchase funnel." A few other basic theories are introduced. There are sections on content marketing and other forms of persuasion. The big picture of marketing is briefly addressed before the chapter concludes with sections on public relations and propaganda.

Advertising Defined

On one level, advertising is a simple concept. Mass media professionals craft messages to help sell products by raising awareness and pushing people to make actual purchase decisions, but in the network society and the age of targeted marketing, the ability to reach individual consumers who fit precise sets of characteristics is incredible. More is expected of advertisers than to put interesting messages in front of the "right people" based on general demographics. Brands may advertise during certain TV shows or publications to reach a particular type of media consumer. This more traditional form of mass media advertising is still a multibillion-dollar industry, but with data-driven targeting capabilities, brands can reach people based not only on general demographic characteristics but on specific behaviors as well. The combination of detailed demographic information, search and digital media usage behaviors and physical world behaviors (such as whether someone has entered a Walmart or Macy's in the past week) makes advertising in the information age more powerful, sometimes more meaningful and often more ethically questionable than in the past. The level of targeting that is possible is incredible and would have been unimaginable 20 years ago. Advertising has always been about tapping into consumers' existing needs or about creating a need and inserting a product to fill it. Now, there is a greater ability than ever to identify and create a need not only for interested members of a mass audience but also for specific individuals in real time based on their online and physical world behavior.

The History of Advertising

Before delving into a discussion about the future of advertising, it might help to survey the history of the field. Advertising in the modern sense emerged between the mid-19th and early-20th centuries. At the same time that the concept of brands was developing, mass-media platforms such as daily newspapers and radio broadcasts grew their audiences and spread their influence geographically. Corporations, conveniently, grew large enough to have massive budgets to spend on advertising. The promotion of products dates back thousands of years, but the modern advertising explosion tracks explosive growth in industrial manufacturing from roughly the mid-1800s through the entire 20th century.



Early newspaper ad for Stark Trees from the Boston Public Library Collection, public domain. Source: Flikr.

HubSpot has a deck of 472 slides that presents a narrative about the history of advertising. Some highlights are referenced here. One key point made in this visual history is that non-branded newspaper ads would often outnumber branded ads in the early days of the newspaper industry. As uniformity in mass-produced goods became the norm and brand differentiation became possible, so did the need to communicate it.

Ayer & Son is credited with being the first ad agency to work on commission. In other words, it is known as the first modern ad agency. It was founded in Philadephia in 1869. Today there are about 500,000 ad agencies in the world of all shapes and sizes. They employ ever-evolving techniques to try to stay ahead of information weary consumers.

Categorizing Advertising Methods

From the mid-20th century on, advertisers conceptualized their work by breaking it down into one of two strategic categories: "above-the-line" and "below-the-line" methods. Put simply, "above the line" (ATL) refers to methods of advertising that target mass audiences on mass media platforms with messages usually designed from a one-to-many point of view. Often, "above the line" implies that the ad or **ad campaign** — a series of related ads meant to work in tandem — appears on legacy media platforms. (Recall that "legacy media" has been defined previously in this text to refer to platforms in existence before the transition to digital.) ATL campaigns most often include television, radio and print ads as well as sponsorships. A **sponsorship** is when a company pays to support an event or a mass media production in exchange for having its brand promoted alongside the activity or content. The organizing concept for ATL advertising, as the term is used today, is that the ads target a mass audience primarily on "legacy" media platforms.



Billboards clutter the roadway in Leakey, Texas. Photo by Marc St. Gil, public domain work of the EPA. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

"Below the line" (BTL) advertising refers to more one-on-one marketing approaches which can include targeted social media campaigns, direct mail marketing, point-of-sale ads, coupons and deals, and email and telemarketing appeals. This is not an exhaustive list of ATL or BTL methods, but these examples demonstrate that ATL has more in common with the concept of mass communication introduced in earlier chapters, and BTL has more in common with interpersonal communication, also as previously discussed. This is not to say that BTL messages are crafted one at a time for individual consumers. Rather, the tone, style and method of dissemination of BTL advertising are more personal.

In the 20th century, the term ATL advertising was associated with ad agency work (mostly mass media campaign ads), whereas BTL advertising referred to pamphlets, point-of-sale marketing and other relatively "small" tasks that ad agencies typically did not

handle. Now, there are ad agencies of all sizes, and even very large agencies might do BTL marketing. Online advertising and social media marketing have made it possible to target people with personal messages but still purchase the ads on a massive scale. Thus, advertising can be **massively individuated** — that is, produced for mass audiences but having the appearance of personalized messages — much like social media content. The profit in BTL marketing comes from reaching large audiences with tailored messages at specific times in relation to their previous purchasing and shopping behaviors. So much data exists on individual users and on the behavior of similar people who have made similar purchases that advertisers can try to target people at precisely the right moment to influence their purchase decisions.

ATL and BTL advertising can work hand in hand. Think of a summer soft drink promotion advertised on television and on the radio (ATL) that is also backed up with neighborhood-specific billboards and hyper-targeted Twitter messages with surprise prizes given out (BTL). BTL messages still reach large numbers of people, but they are by definition more tailored than ATL ads. An individual ad in a BTL context may not cost as much as a massive ad buy facilitated by an agency that primarily does ATL advertising; however, BTL advertising can still be costly for advertisers and profitable for ad agencies in the aggregate. For example, an ad agency that does not typically manage multimillion-dollar television ad buys might still put together hundreds of thousands of dollars in targeted social media ads. Rather than displaying one commercial for several months, the BTL social media campaign might be made up of dozens of targeted videos, tweets, influencer posts and online ads. Often software algorithms are used to decide who sees which targeted ad and when.

The Advertising Funnel and Other Key Concepts

At its heart, advertising is a matter of raising *awareness*, creating a deeper *interest* in a product, and encouraging consumers to *desire* to make a purchase and ultimately to take *action*. Professional communicators tailor messages in relation to the advertising funnel or **purchase funnel**, as shown in the image on the left. Brands, either on their own or with the help of advertising agencies, target audiences in different ways at specific points along the funnel to reach their strategic goals. For example, if an unknown brand launches a new product, people need to be made aware of both the brand and product. The brand may need to establish itself with an awareness campaign. If Nike introduces a new Air Jordan, the branding is easily handled. The top of the funnel areas of awareness and interest will not need as much focus as the decision and action areas, the "down funnel" aspects of a campaign for a well-known and well-loved brand.



Simple graphic representation of the purchase funnel. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Another way to think of this is as a pathway a potential customer makes, also known as the **consumer journey**. First, the consumer needs to be made aware of the brand and its products. Then, they might take an interest in a particular product as they learn more about its features. They need to move from being interested to desiring a product if they are going to make the purchase. Ultimately, from the advertiser's point of view, the goal is not only to move the consumer to purchase the product but also to inspire them to advocate for the brand. This is not conceptually complicated. The idea is to move people in straightforward steps toward desired behaviors; however, there are complex processes of cognition and persuasion that underlie consumer decisions.

Consumer behavior is about as unpredictable as other forms of human behavior. There are also ethical concerns. If a product or service proves to be harmful, advertisers and public relations professionals have to decide if and when they will stop marketing the brand. Advertising is challenging enough when products do not raise ethical dilemmas. Promoting harmful products can be damaging socially, professionally and personally. Thus, the world of consumer advertising in the mass media is more complex than the funnel makes it seem, although it is an essential strategic model in the industry. There are two other advertising concepts or theories that this text aims to introduce: the basic rule of seven and the third-person effect.

The Rule of Seven



The number 7 painted above goods entrance to old Carlton United Brewery, Victoria Street, Melbourne, Australia. Photo by Chris Samuel, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

The advertising **rule of seven** is a rule of thumb, or what social scientists call a heuristic, which suggests that people need to see an advertisement seven times before they act on it. Even then, there is no guarantee that seeing something seven times will *compel* a person to buy a certain product, vote for a particular politician or take any other consumer action. Instead, the point is that consistent messaging is a base requirement for advertising to work.

The purchase decision is ultimately a personal one. You can create the conditions and increase the probability of a product being bought, but it is difficult (perhaps impossible) to predict behaviors based on messaging. Even the most successful advertising and propaganda campaigns only constitute one area of influence on behavior. As previously stated in this text, social institutions such as your family, friends, church and workplace can influence your behavior in tandem with or contrary to what you see and hear in the mass media.

The Third-Person Effect

There is a theory in the study of mass communication called the third-person effect that says we tend to think advertising is effective but we believe that it does not affect *us*. Note here that social science theories are based on many observable facts. This is not a flight of fancy. Rather, this is a tested theory demonstrated in multiple studies. Here is how the third-person effect works with regard to advertising: You might think upon seeing a clever advertisement, “Sure, that ad probably got someone *else* to buy the product, but it doesn’t influence *me*. I’m a savvy shopper. I don’t just go out and buy whatever ads tell me to buy. I’m not Homer Simpson looking at billboards.”

And yet we do know that advertising works at least to influence behavior. It has measurable effects on attitudes, that is, what people think about brands. Advertising influences brand and product awareness in individuals and in groups. We can say with a degree of certainty that some people are directly influenced by some ads some of the time, and we can say that many people are *indirectly* influenced by ads almost all of the time. For example, you may not drink Coke Zero, but you probably know what it is, and you may know that it is now called Coke Zero Sugar after a name change in 2017. Whether you understand the logic behind the name change or you actually buy the soft drink is another question. Campaigns to make consumers *aware* of new brands and products have a track record of widespread but still limited success.

Now here is what’s interesting about the third-person effect. Knowing that advertising can influence people’s awareness and purchase decisions, we tend to develop a sort of **double delusion** where we think other people are probably affected more than they are, and we think we are influenced less than we are. Sometimes we even base our behavior on what we think other people will do after receiving a message in the mass media. It works like this: We hear a message that a winter storm is coming, and we worry that other people will be easily influenced by that news. That *worry* and not the original message may influence our behavior. The author of the original study noted that if there is news of a possible shortage, people sometimes buy up that item at grocery stores. This has happened as recently as 2008. Rice futures went up and up out of fear that people were stockpiling rice. So, what did people do? They stockpiled rice. Costco and Sam’s Club even put limits on the number of large bags of rice people could purchase.

How does the bread and milk effect work? Following the third-person effect theory, an individual hears about a storm coming to the East Coast of the United States. He thinks that *other people* are going to feel the need to go out and buy up all of the bread and milk, so, aware of the threat and concerned about *their* behavior, he goes out and buys bread and milk. Now the concern has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. People are, in fact, buying up the bread and milk. The question is whether they are buying it up because they are unduly influenced by messages in the mass media, or they are responding out of fear of how other people will behave. You can imagine other people foolishly thinking a winter storm is going to be worse than it is and you can think to yourself you had better buy the bread and milk before those fools, but to them, you have become the fool.



Three-person horse graffiti. Photo by Seth de L'Isle, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

The third-person effect is also a major issue in race relations and partisan politics. We often presume that we *know* how individuals from other groups will think because we have seen messages in the media and we presume to know how the "other" will respond. The third-person effect is based on three presumptions. First, we assume that other people have seen the messages we have. Then, we presume that they will be influenced by those messages. Finally, we presume that they will behave in certain ways because of the message and because of our preconceptions about different groups. For the theory to work, it does not matter if the "other" is Democrats, Republicans, frat bros, Mexican people, snobby professors or slacker college students. Our assumptions can be completely wrong and we may still find ourselves acting in ways to pre-empt or counteract the imagined behavior of the imagined "other." There are different degrees of the third-person effect. Researchers have found it is probably strongest in situations where groups have little understanding of one another and where the messages and perceived outcomes are thought to be negative (note the section on Perloff). This is not to overstate the third-person effect. Like other theories related to persuasion in the mass media the behavioral influences it identifies have to contend with other social forces to influence behavior. Still, it is one of the most interesting theories in the field of mass communication, and it can explain why people race out to buy a certain product when they perceive it to be scarce. We do not want anyone to beat us to the bread and milk.

Content Marketing

Content marketing refers to a common practice where brands produce their own content, or hire someone else to produce it, and then market that information as an alternative to advertising. It still moves people along the purchase funnel, but there is usually added value in this type of content. If an advertisement for a mattress describes its features and price, a blog funded by the mattress brand might compare the pros and cons of many different mattresses, perhaps with a bias for the brand. It isn't always pretty. Content produced for a brand should ethically be labeled as sponsored, but it is not always done. In cases when consumers have discovered that trusted sources were content marketers rather than independent reviewers, the revelations have created public relations problems for the brands. Content marketing done ethically offers financial transparency while providing valuable information and an emotional connection to the product for consumers. It can take the form of blog posts or entire blogs. Such marketing is usually optimized for search engines, which is to say the posts are written to attract search engine attention as well as outside links, which also alerts search engines that this content is valuable. Done well, branded content can be seen as more authentic than advertising content, and it can be cheaper to produce and disseminate. It is difficult to do well, of course.

The most common types of content created in this context besides blog content are social media profiles and posts, sponsored content in social media spaces and even viral video and meme chasing. Brands might have their own social media profiles, or they might support social media influencers to promote their products in a sponsored way. Brands might also use their influencer teams or their own internal marketing teams to follow viral social media trends and to create memes. In a sense, content marketing allows a brand to create a more human profile in digital spaces. In this manner, brands can engage with potential and repeat customers. Brands can foster relationships and encourage brand advocacy among people not being paid to promote their products. Many brands use this form of marketing to engage consumers on a deep level and to offer information and emotion that might not be present in other forms of advertising.

Marketing Disambiguated

The more you study the bigger picture of **marketing** — which includes advertising strategies and other research efforts meant to guide advertising strategies as part of larger sales and production strategies—the more you recognize how focused advertising is. It may seem that advertising is the biggest, most important element of the mass communication industry because its revenues fuel other types of mass media production, but advertising is only one piece of the marketing puzzle. **Marketing's four P's** — often described as product, price, place and promotion (or position) — encompass much more than making messages to support brands and products. Marketing professionals worry about all four and consider advertising as just one part of the promotion category. Advertising professionals will often argue that the best branding helps define and redefine the product over time so that the product

only exists in consumers' minds as advertising has described it, but marketing gets into the business of deciding what products to make, how to promote them, whom to market them to and when to stop making them.

HubSpot, the advertising company that provided the quick history of advertising early on in this chapter also gets credit for helping to popularize **inbound marketing**. The idea of inbound marketing is that you bring people in to learn about your product using content marketing and then you can make sales to them in the context of a relationship where they found you rather than vice versa. In a sense, inbound marketing turns advertising upside down by building spaces and inviting consumers *in* to find what they are already looking for rather than trying to create a need *out* of the glut of information in digital communication networks. Inbound marketing is advertising's answer to de-massification. It involves developing consistent messages and content of uses that are so compelling people will come to the brand to experience them. It is the audience-building aspect of advertising. It relates in many ways to the superbug media concept from previous chapters, and it is growing in popularity as people and companies develop new and better ways of avoiding advertising.

An established method of inbound marketing is to write a blog or develop a podcast that attracts audiences who come for information and who stay for the delicious products. To fully understand the power of inbound marketing, ask yourself if you have ever become a brand advocate. Have you ever sung the praises of your new smartphone or told people they had to try a new restaurant? If you have advocated for a brand and sent people looking for it online, you have probably become part of someone's inbound marketing strategy. In many ways, marketing (particularly content marketing) bridges the concepts of advertising and public relations because it includes content production similar to advertising and it establishes relationships with consumers, which is the ultimate purpose of PR.

Public Relations

The history of the public relations field is often misunderstood. Many think of public relations as organized manipulation made up of corporate, political and even non-profit propaganda. It is often thought of as deception, but this is not always the case. In a society fueled by networked communications, it is becoming less important to ask what messages people receive and more important to ask what messages they seek out, according to Greg Jarboe, author of a brief history of PR. Jarboe worked for a PR firm with offices in San Francisco and Boston, two of the most well-established technology markets in the country. He argues that PR is more about creating a sense of understanding between consumers and brands and that this might be done just as well by the brand in digital spaces just as it is via other mass media channels controlled by other corporate entities. Historically, PR depended on other media platforms such as TV, newspapers and magazines to promote its content. Content marketing means this is no longer the case. Mass media platforms may still be needed to reach mass audiences outside of a brand's collection of fans and followers, but much goodwill can be generated by maintaining a proactive, positive and professional digital presence.

While it is true that PR often tries to put a good face on companies with all manner of reputations and harmful business practices, it also serves charities, governmental services and small local businesses. Not every institutional organization can have a huge PR budget, but the practices can be taught to just about any small business owner.

The History of PR and Propaganda

At the core of PR is a simple model developed by Harold Lasswell in the 1940s. Developing an effective PR model was an important war effort during World War II when it was essential to develop theories for how propaganda worked to determine what the Nazis were doing and, if possible, how their propaganda could be stopped. Lasswell's model asked five simple questions: *who* (Sender) sent *what* (Message) through which *channel* (Channel) to which *audience* (Receiver) and with what *effect.* This was a way of breaking down mass influence beyond advertising. In a sense, governmental propaganda is PR, but the client is a country. The **S-M-C-R model** (often attributed in that particular configuration to Berlo) is the most efficient model for understanding how to break down and analyze messages in the mass media.



"Communication" by Jonny Hughes, CCBY. Source: Flikr.

Professionals and academics examine and manipulate all four components to isolate which changes correlate with which behavioral effects. S-M-C-R assumes that the sender comes first and the receiver comes last. There is a time element that must be established in researching the effects of mass-mediated messages, but the point is that this simple model of propaganda became the basis for all sorts of media effects studies. Propaganda and PR messaging does not work immediately to bring about drastic changes in behavior. Behavioral phenomena, particularly *changes in behavior*, are driven by many variables, as we have discussed several times; however, if you want to begin to look at an advertising campaign, film or news documentary to examine its effects, this is the model to start with.

Noise must be accounted for, and in an age dominated by the digital information glut, the opportunity for immediate feedback and engagement must also be considered. Receivers almost immediately become senders in a network. Thus, the S-M-C-R model will often include measures looking at how much noise gets into the system and looking at what happens when receivers immediately start their own S-M-C-R processes. Wherever a message originates, even if it is as simple as clicking "Share" on Facebook, the S-M-C-R model starts again.

More Concepts in PR

For most of the 20th century, the shorthand definition of PR was that it was like advertising only instead of paying a media outlet to run a message, you sent the message out to journalists and other **gatekeepers** (see Chapter 9) in the hopes that they would share the information as news. Now, PR has to work in a digital media system where news reporters and editors are not the major gatekeepers deciding what information will be made public. PR professionals now need to think about search algorithms, search engine optimization, social media trends, social media platform algorithms, social media influencers and social link sharing sites such as Reddit. Publicity on these channels can be worth tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars. PR often measures its worth in **earned media —** the amount of free air time on TV or space in major newspapers and magazines that is earned by getting other mass media channels to tell your product's stories without having to pay for ad space

An example of earned media is when Apple released a new iPhone, and news organizations provided coverage of the lines that wrapped around city blocks as people waited for the latest gadget. For years, Apple earned millions of dollars in earned media by keeping new features a secret and then releasing new iPhones with considerable hype. Free marketing time and space in digital and print publications can help push a brand from being a leader to being legendary. Global PR is a $14 billion industry.

PR can take the form of an event, a product placement, or a skillfully crafted message delivered during a crisis. It is much less about promoting specific brands and more about promoting and maintaining the image of a brand, company or large corporation. Recall that advertising tends to focus on brands and products. PR can focus on the company and the **corporate narrative**, the story of how the company came to exist and how it represents certain values and ideals — at least in theory.

Sometimes it helps us to understand an element of mass media if we discuss when it all goes wrong. When British Petroleum (BP) had an oil gusher erupt in the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010, after the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded, 11 people died, and more than three million barrels of oil leaked into the gulf. It took almost three months to cap the oil gusher. The CEO of BP, Anthony Bryan "Tony" Hayward, lost his job because he made a major PR blunder when he said he just wanted his "life back." Eleven people were dead. The fishing and tourism industries of Louisiana, Mississippi and parts of Texas, ravaged by hurricanes just years before, were being threatened again. This time, though, Mother Nature was not to blame. It was BP, a multinational corporation that up to that point had been working to create a more environmentally friendly image. It took BP years to come back from that disaster, and it was made worse because of poor crisis communications. PR is about promoting good relationships with your consumers, your employees and the communities where your products are made. It is about earning "free" news and social media coverage, but perhaps most importantly it is about managing crises so that people are not given a reason *not* to buy your products.

Crisis Management

The best way to build good PR is to carefully maintain a good reputation over time and to avoid behaviors as an individual, company or corporation that might harm others. The best prevention against bad PR is to follow your industry's and your own ethical codes at all times, whatever they are. Even if you do this, you might face a PR crisis. For example, a politician might decide to target your brand regardless of whether your business practices are ethical. All the more reason to maintain good longstanding relationships with your consumers.



"War on the bullshit!" graffiti in London. Photo by Duncan Hull, CCBY. Source: Flickr.

The first rule of crisis communications is to plan ahead by anticipating the kinds of problems your company might have. Chemical companies should prepare for chemical spills. Sports teams will probably not prepare for environmental disasters, but they may have to prepare for the social media scandals that players sometimes land themselves in. If there is a disaster, the advice is to "be truthful and transparent," to not say too much and to correct any exaggerations that emerge in the news media and on social media, within reason. Engaging in social media arguments is almost never productive for a brand, unless you have Wendy's level of Twitter clapback. A major goal of PR efforts during a crisis is to try to make people forget there ever was a crisis.

Journalists often have the opposite interest because reporting on conflict is interesting. Helping people to survive is one of the primary functions of journalism. This explains why negative news gets so much more attention than positive news. No one dies when people do their jobs salting the roads and drivers maneuver safely in snowstorms. When people crash, that, sadly, is news. Journalists know that people care about safety perhaps more than any other issue, so they focus on safety concerns during times of crisis. At these times, PR and journalism can be at odds, but truth and transparency are still advisable to the PR professional. You do not legally have to tell journalists everything that has happened (depending on the circumstances and whether your institution is funded by taxpayers), but if journalists discover a negative impact that you failed to disclose, they will wonder what else you are hiding, and they may give your critics and detractors extra consideration and attention.

PR professionals work to manage story framing. (Recall that framing was defined in Chapter 9.) PR pros often work with journalists to cover negative stories with clarity and honesty rather than trying to hide the facts about a crisis. Finally, in PR there is the need to learn from mistakes and to analyze a company or corporation's crisis responses. As difficult as it might be to go back and discuss where communication failed, it is essential. Reflection is a critical step in learning and corporations are like any other social institution. They need to learn to survive and to thrive.

PR Wars

Besides the conflict during crisis situations between journalists and PR professionals, there are PR battles that go on between competing brands and between non-profits, corporations and government officials all the time. Lobbyists make demands on politicians but also push agendas on mass media and social media platforms. In an age of digital communication, it is cheap and easy to develop detailed, professional messages employing a variety of media types that PR pros can try to spread around the world instantaneously. You should be aware as an information consumer that there are ongoing battles for your allegiance. Corporations engage in PR combat all the time, though they often try to work undetected. This is not to claim conspiracy or to frighten readers. It is simply a matter of fact that PR efforts are ongoing and that attacks within these battles do not always take the form of headlines. They may come in the form of messages from Twitter bots, **botnets,** collections of fake social media profiles run by software or blogs, or email spam.

You can influence other people by what you read and share, and you are encouraged once again to be aware of where your news sources get *their* information. Read and think before you share. It has become easy for individuals and fake accounts to publish information into the world's information glut. Twitter and Instagram followers and Facebook friends can easily be bought. Major political influence is now wielded by fake accounts working to drum up anger and to promote misinformation to sway public opinion. Individual information consumers must take responsibility for their own consumption and for what they spread. Your media health is as important as your sexual health. Protect yourself and those you share information with.

What you need to be able to do is to consider a source, consider how it is presenting its message, and consider the source's sources. Media literacy is about what enters your mind: what stays in (that is, what is **salient**) and what goes out. We are all publishers now. Media, society, and culture will always influence you to some degree, but they are also yours to try to control. Mass audiences may be in decline but entities who know how to build mass networks of users and how to successfully, if not always ethically, use their information are only starting to show their power.

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8.1.1: Social Cognitions

The culture that we live in has a significant impact on the way we think about and perceive our social worlds, so it is not surprising that people in different cultures would think about people and things somewhat differently. Social cognitions are the way we think about others, pay attention to social information, and use the information in our lives (consciously or unconsciously). In this section we will review several types of social cognitions including schemas, attributions, confirmation bias and the fundamental attribution error. We will also revisit analytic perception and holistic perception that we learned earlier in this chapter.

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8.1.2: Schema

Through the process of cognitive development, we accumulate a lot of knowledge and this knowledge is stored in the form of **schemas,** which are knowledge representations that include information about a person, group, or situation. Because they represent our past experience, and because past experience is useful for prediction, our schemas influence our expectations about future events and people.

When a schema is activated it brings to mind other related information. This process is usually unconscious, or happens outside of our awareness. Through schema activation, judgments are formed based on internal assumptions (bias) in addition to information actually available in the environment. When a schema is more accessible it can be activated more quickly and used in a particular situation. For example, if there is one female in a group of seven males, female gender schemas may be more accessible and influence the group's thinking and behavior toward the female group member. Watching a scary movie late at night might increase the accessibility of frightening schemas, increasing the likelihood that a person will perceive shadows and background noises as potential threats.

Once they have developed, schemas influence our subsequent learning, such that the new people and situations we encounter are interpreted and understood in terms of our existing knowledge (Piaget & Inhelder, 1962; Taylor & Crocker, 1981). When existing schemas change on the basis of new information, we call the process **accommodation.** In other cases, however, we engage in **assimilation**, a process in which our existing knowledge influences new conflicting information to better fit with our existing knowledge, thus reduces the likelihood of schema change. You may remember these concepts from Chapter 4 when we learned about Piaget's theory of cognitive development.

Psychologists have become increasingly interested in the influence of culture on social cognition and schemas. Although people of all cultures use schemas to understand the world, the content of our schemas has been found to differ for individuals based on their cultural upbringing. For example, one study interviewed a Scottish settler and a Bantu herdsman from Swaziland and compared their schemas about cattle. Because cattle are essential to the lifestyle of the Bantu people, the Bantu herdsman's schemas for cattle were far more extensive than the schemas of the Scottish settler. The Bantu herdsmen was able to distinguish his cattle from dozens of others, while the Scottish settler was not.

One outcome of assimilation that shapes our schema is **confirmation bias,** the tendency for people to seek out and favor information that confirms their expectations and beliefs, which in turn can further help to explain the often, self-fulfilling nature of our schemas. The confirmation bias has been shown to occur in many contexts and groups, although there is some evidence of cultural differences in its extent and prevalence. Kastenmuller and colleagues (2010), for instance, found that the bias was stronger among people with individualist (e.g., the United States, Canada, and Australia) versus collectivist (e.g., Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, India among others) cultural backgrounds. The researchers argued that this partly stemmed from collectivist cultures putting greater importance in being self-critical, which is less compatible with seeking out confirming as opposed to disconfirming evidence.

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8.1.3: Attributions

Psychologists who study social cognition believe that behavior is the product of the situation (e.g., role, culture, other people around) and the person (e.g., temperament, personality, health, motivation). **Attributions** are beliefs that a person develops to explain human behaviors, characteristics and situations. This means that we try to explain or make conclusions about the causes of our own behavior and others' behavior. Internal attributions are **dispositional** (e.g., traits, abilities, feelings), and external attributions are **situational** (e.g., things in the environment). Our attributions are frequently biased. One way that our attributions may be biased is that we are often too quick to attribute the behavior of other people to something personal about them rather than to something about their situation. This is a classic example of the general human tendency of underestimating how important the social situation really is in determining behavior. **Fundamental attribution error (FAE)** is the tendency to overestimate the degree to which the characteristics of an individual are the cause of an event, and to underestimate the involvement of situational factors. FAE is considered to be universal but that cultural differences may explain how and when FAE occurs.

Attributions and Culture

On average, people from individualistic cultures tend to focus their internal attributions more on the individual person, whereas, people from collectivistic cultures tend to focus more on the situation (Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000; Lewis, Goto, & Kong, 2008; Maddux & Yuki, 2006). Miller (1984) asked children and adults in both India (a collectivistic culture) and the United States (an individualist culture) to indicate the causes of negative actions by other people. Although the younger children (ages 8 and 11) did not differ, the older children (age 15) and the adults did. Americans made more dispositional attributions, whereas Indians made more situational attributions for the same behavior.

Morris and his colleagues (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000) investigated the role of culture on person perception in a different way, by focusing on people who are bicultural (i.e., who have knowledge about two different cultures). In their research, they used high school students living in Hong Kong. Although traditional Chinese values are emphasized in Hong Kong, because Hong Kong was a British-administrated territory for more than a century, the students there are also enculturated with Western social beliefs and values.

Morris and his colleagues first randomly assigned the students to one of three priming conditions. Participants in the *American culture* priming condition saw pictures of American icons (such as the U.S. Capitol building and the American flag) and then wrote 10 sentences about American culture. Participants in the *Chinese culture* priming condition saw eight Chinese icons (such as a Chinese dragon and the Great Wall of China) and then wrote 10 sentences about Chinese culture. Finally, participants in the *control condition* saw pictures of natural landscapes and wrote 10 sentences about the landscapes.

Then participants in all conditions read a story about an overweight boy who was advised by a physician not to eat food with high sugar content. One day, he and his friends went to a buffet dinner where a delicious-looking cake was offered. Despite its high sugar content, he ate it. After reading the story, the participants were asked to indicate the extent to which the boy's weight problem was caused by his personality (personal attribution) or by the situation (situational attribution). The students who had been primed with symbols about American culture gave relatively less weight to situational (rather than personal) factors in comparison with students who had been primed with symbols of Chinese culture.

In still another test of cultural differences in person perception, Kim and Markus (1999) analyzed the statements made by athletes and by the news media regarding the winners of medals in the 2000 and 2002 Olympic Games. They found that athletes in China described themselves more in terms of the situation (they talked about the importance of their coaches, their managers, and the spectators in helping them to do well), whereas American athletes (can you guess?) focused on themselves, emphasizing their own strength, determination, and focus.

Most people tend to use the same basic perception processes, but given the cultural differences in group interconnectedness (individualistic versus collectivist), as well as differences in attending (analytic versus holistic), it should come as no surprise that people who live in collectivistic cultures tend to show the fundamental attribution error less often than those from individualistic cultures, particularly when the situational causes of behavior are made salient (Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999). Bias attributions can lead to negative stereotyping and discrimination but being more aware of these cross-cultural differences in attribution may reduce cultural misunderstandings and misinterpreting behavior.

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8.1.4: Categories and Concepts

The information we sense and perceive is continuously organized and reorganized into **concepts** that belong to **categories**. Most concepts cannot be strictly defined but are organized around the best examples or **prototypes,** which have the properties most common in the category or might be considered the ideal example of a category.

Concepts are at the core of intelligent behavior. We expect people to be able to know what to do in new situations and when confronting new objects. If you go into a new classroom and see chairs, a blackboard, a projector, and a screen, you know what these things are and how they will be used. You'll sit on one of the chairs and expect the instructor to write on the blackboard or project something onto the screen. You'll do this even if you have never seen any of these particular objects before, because you have concepts of classrooms, chairs, projectors, and so forth that tell you what they are and what you're supposed to do with them.

Objects fall into many different categories, but there is usually a hierarchy to help us organize our mental representations.

- A concept at the **superordinate** level of categories is at the top of a taxonomy and it has a high degree of generality (e.g., animal, fruit).
- A concept at the **basic** level categories is found at the generic level which contains the most salient differences (e.g., dog, apple).
- A concept at the **subordinate** level of categories is specific degree and has little generality (e.g., Labrador retriever, Gala).

Brown (1958) noted that children use basic level categories when first learning language and superordinates are especially difficult for children to fully acquire. People are faster at identifying objects as members of basic-level categories (Rosch et al., 1976). Recent research suggests that there are different ways to learn and represent concepts and that they are accomplished by different neural systems. Using our earlier example of classroom, if someone tells you a new fact about the projector, like it uses a halogen bulb, you are likely to extend this fact to other projectors you encounter. In short, concepts allow you to extend what you have learned about a limited number of objects to a potentially infinite set of events and possibilities.

Categorization and Culture

There are some universal categories like emotions, facial expressions, shape and color but culture can shape how we organize information. Chiu (1972) was the first to examine cultural differences in categorization using Chinese and American children. Participants were presented with three pictures (e.g., a tire, a car, and a bus), and were asked to group the two pictures they thought best belonged together. Participants were also asked to explain their choices (e.g., "Because they are both large"). Results showed that the Chinese children have a greater tendency to categorize by identifying relationships among the pictures but American children were more likely to categorize by identifying similarities among pictures.

Later research reported no cultural differences in categorization between Western and East Asian participants; however, among similarity categorizations the East Asian participants were more likely to make decisions on holistic aspects of the images and Western participants were more like to make decisions based on individual components of the images (Norenzayan, Smith, Jun Kim, and Nisbett, 2002). Cultural differences in categorizing were also found by Unworth, Sears and Pexman (2005) across three experiments however, when the experiment task was timed there were differences in category selection. These results suggest that the nature (timed or untimed) of the categorization task determines the extent to which cultural differences are observed.

The results of these categorization studies seem to support the differences in thinking between individualist and collectivist cultures. Western cultures are more individualist and engage in more analytic thinking and East Asian cultures engage in more holistic thinking (Choi, Nisbett, & Smith, 1997; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001; Nisbett et al., 2001; Peng & Nisbett, 1999). You might remember from the earlier section that holistic thought is characterized by a focus on context and environmental factors so categorizing by relationships can be explained with referencing how objects relate to their environment. Analytic thought is characterized by the separation of an object from its context so categorizing by similarity means that objects can be separated into different groups. A major limitation with these studies is the emphasis on East Asian, specifically the use of Chinese participants and Western cultures. There have been no within culture replications using participants from other non-Asian collectivist cultures.

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8.1.5: Exploring Attitudes

Learning Objectives

1. Define the concept of attitude and explain why it is of such interest to social psychologists.
2. Review the variables that determine attitude strength.
3. Outline the factors affect the strength of the attitude-behavior relationship.

Although we might use the term in a different way in our everyday life ("Hey, he's really got an *attitude*!"), social psychologists reserve the term attitude to refer to our *relatively enduring evaluation of something*, where the something is called the *attitude object*. The attitude object might be a person, a product, or a social group (Albarracín, Johnson, & Zanna, 2005; Wood, 2000). In this section we will consider the nature and strength of attitudes and the conditions under which attitudes best predict our behaviors.

Attitudes Are Evaluations

When we say that attitudes are evaluations, we mean that they involve a preference for or against the attitude object, as commonly expressed in such terms as *prefer*, *like*, *dislike*, *hate*, and *love*. When we express our attitudes—for instance, when we say, "I love Cheerios," "I hate snakes," "I'm crazy about Bill," or "I like Italians"—we are expressing the relationship (either positive or negative) between the self and an attitude object. Statements such as these make it clear that attitudes are an important part of the self-concept—attitudes tie the self-concept to the attitude object, and so our attitudes are an essential part of "us."

Every human being holds thousands of attitudes, including those about family and friends, political parties and political figures, abortion rights and terrorism, preferences for music, and much more. Each of our attitudes has its own unique characteristics, and no two attitudes come to us or influence us in quite the same way. Research has found that some of our attitudes are inherited, at least in part, via genetic transmission from our parents (Olson, Vernon, Harris, & Jang, 2001). Other attitudes are learned mostly through direct and indirect experiences with the attitude objects (De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001). We may like to ride roller coasters in part because our genetic code has given us a thrill-loving personality and in part because we've had some really great times on roller coasters in the past. Still other attitudes are learned via the media (Hargreaves & Tiggemann, 2003; Levina, Waldo, & Fitzgerald, 2000) or through our interactions with friends (Poteat, 2007). Some of our attitudes are shared by others (most of us like sugar, fear snakes, and are disgusted by cockroaches), whereas other attitudes—such as our preferences for different styles of music or art—are more individualized.

Table 5.1 shows some of the attitudes that have been found to be the most highly heritable (i.e. most strongly determined by genetic variation among people). These attitudes form earlier and are stronger and more resistant to change than others (Bourgeois, 2002), although it is not yet known why some attitudes are more genetically determined than are others.

Table 5.1 Heritability of Some Attitudes

Attitude	Heritability
Abortion on demand	0.54
Roller coaster rides	0.52
Death penalty for murder	0.5
Open-door immigration	0.46
Organized religion	0.45
Doing athletic activities	0.44
Voluntary euthanasia	0.44
Capitalism	0.39
Playing chess	0.38

Ranked from most heritable to least heritable. Data are from Olson, Vernon, Harris, and Jang (2001).

Attitude	Heritability
Reading books	0.37
Exercising	0.36
Education	0.32
Big parties	0.32
Smoking	0.31
Being the center of attention	0.28
Getting along well with other people	0.28
Wearing clothes that draw attention	0.24
Sweets	0.22
Public speaking	0.2
Castration as punishment for sex crimes	0.17
Loud music	0.11
Looking my best at all times	0.1
Doing crossword puzzles	0.02
Separate roles for men and women	0
Making racial discrimination illegal	0
Playing organized sports	0
Playing bingo	0
Easy access to birth control	0
Being the leader of groups	0
Being assertive	0

Ranked from most heritable to least heritable. Data are from Olson, Vernon, Harris, and Jang (2001).

Our attitudes are made up of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Consider my own attitude toward chocolate ice cream, which is very positive and always has been, as far as I can remember.

In terms of affect:

I LOVE it!

In terms of behavior:

I frequently eat chocolate ice cream.

In terms of cognitions:

Chocolate ice cream has a smooth texture and a rich, strong taste.

My attitude toward chocolate ice cream is composed of affect, behavior, and cognition.

Although most attitudes are determined by cognition, affect, and behavior, there is nevertheless variability in this regard across people and across attitudes. Some attitudes are more likely to be based on beliefs, some more likely to be based on feelings, and some more likely to be based on behaviors. I would say that my attitude toward chocolate ice cream is in large part determined by affect—although I can describe its taste, mostly I just like it. My attitudes toward my Toyota Corolla and my home air conditioner, on the other hand, are more cognitive. I don't really like them so much as I admire their positive features (the Toyota gets good gas

mileage and the air conditioner keeps me cool on hot summer days). Still other of my attitudes are based more on behavior—I feel like I've learned to like my neighbors because I've done favors for them over the years (which they have returned) and these helpful behaviors on my part have, at least in part, led me to develop a positive attitude toward them.

Different people may hold attitudes toward the same attitude object for different reasons. Some people voted for Barack Obama in the 2008 elections because they like his policies ("he's working for the middle class"; "he wants to increase automobile fuel efficiency"), whereas others voted for (or against) him because they just liked (or disliked) him. Although you might think that cognition would be more important in this regard, political scientists have shown that many voting decisions are made primarily on the basis of affect. Indeed, it is fair to say that the affective component of attitudes is generally the strongest and most important (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1981; Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991).

Human beings hold attitudes because they are useful. Particularly, our attitudes enable us to determine, often very quickly and effortlessly, which behaviors to engage in, which people to approach or avoid, and even which products to buy (Duckworth, Bargh, Garcia, & Chaiken, 2002; Maio & Olson, 2000). You can imagine that making quick decisions about what to avoid

$$\text{snake} = \text{bad} \longrightarrow \text{run away}$$

or to approach

$$\text{blueberries} = \text{good} \longrightarrow \text{eat}$$

has had substantial value in our evolutionary experience.

Because attitudes are evaluations, they can be assessed using any of the normal measuring techniques used by social psychologists (Banaji & Heiphetz, 2010). Attitudes are frequently assessed using self-report measures, but they can also be assessed more indirectly using measures of arousal and facial expressions (Mendes, 2008) as well as implicit measures of cognition, such as the *Implicit Association Test (IAT)*. Attitudes can also be seen in the brain by using neuroimaging techniques. This research has found that our attitudes, like most of our social knowledge, are stored primarily in the prefrontal cortex but that the amygdala is important in emotional attitudes, particularly those associated with fear (Cunningham, Raye, & Johnson, 2004; Cunningham & Zelazo, 2007; van den Bos, McClure, Harris, Fiske, & Cohen, 2007). Attitudes can be activated extremely quickly—often within one fifth of a second after we see an attitude object (Handy, Smilek, Geiger, Liu, & Schooler, 2010).

Some Attitudes Are Stronger Than Others

Some attitudes are more important than others, because they are more useful to us and thus have more impact on our daily lives. *The importance of an attitude, as assessed by how quickly it comes to mind*, is known as attitude strength (Fazio, 1990; Fazio, 1995; Krosnick & Petty, 1995). Some of our attitudes are strong attitudes, in the sense that we find them important, hold them with confidence, do not change them very much, and use them frequently to guide our actions. These strong attitudes may guide our actions completely out of our awareness (Ferguson, Bargh, & Nayak, 2005).

Other attitudes are weaker and have little influence on our actions. For instance, John Bargh and his colleagues (Bargh, Chaiken, Raymond, & Hymes, 1996) found that people could express attitudes toward nonsense words such as *juvalamu* (which people liked) and *chakaka* (which they did not like). The researchers also found that these attitudes were very weak. On the other hand, the heavy voter turnout for Barack Obama in the 2008 elections was probably because many of his supporters had strong positive attitudes about him.

Strong attitudes are attitudes that are more cognitively accessible—they come to mind quickly, regularly, and easily. We can easily measure attitude strength by assessing how quickly our attitudes are activated when we are exposed to the attitude object. If we can state our attitude quickly, without much thought, then it is a strong one. If we are unsure about our attitude and need to think about it for a while before stating our opinion, the attitude is weak.

Attitudes become stronger when we have direct positive or negative experiences with the attitude object, and particularly if those experiences have been in strong positive or negative contexts. Russell Fazio and his colleagues (Fazio, Powell, & Herr, 1983) had people either work on some puzzles or watch other people work on the same puzzles. Although the people who watched ended up either liking or disliking the puzzles as much as the people who actually worked on them, Fazio found that attitudes, as assessed by reaction time measures, were stronger (in the sense of being expressed quickly) for the people who had directly experienced the puzzles.

Because attitude strength is determined by cognitive accessibility, it is possible to make attitudes stronger by increasing the accessibility of the attitude. This can be done directly by having people think about, express, or discuss their attitudes with others.

After people think about their attitudes, talk about them, or just say them out loud, the attitudes they have expressed become stronger (Downing, Judd, & Brauer, 1992; Tesser, Martin, & Mendolia, 1995). Because attitudes are linked to the self-concept, they also become stronger when they are activated along with the self-concept. When we are looking into a mirror or sitting in front of a TV camera, our attitudes are activated and we are then more likely to act on them (Beaman, Klentz, Diener, & Svanum, 1979).

Attitudes are also stronger when the ABCs of affect, behavior, and cognition all line up. As an example, many people's attitude toward their own nation is universally positive. They have strong positive feelings about their country, many positive thoughts about it, and tend to engage in behaviors that support it. Other attitudes are less strong because the affective, cognitive, and behavioral components are each somewhat different (Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995). My affect toward chocolate ice cream is positive—I like it a lot. On the other hand, my cognitions are more negative—I know that eating too much ice cream can make me fat and that it is bad for my coronary arteries. And even though I love chocolate ice cream, I don't eat some every time I get a chance. These inconsistencies among the components of my attitude make it less strong than it would be if all the components lined up together.

When Do Our Attitudes Guide Our Behavior?

Social psychologists (as well as advertisers, marketers, and politicians) are particularly interested in the behavioral aspect of attitudes. Because it is normal that the ABCs of our attitudes are at least somewhat consistent, our behavior tends to follow from our affect and cognition. If I determine that you have more positive cognitions about and more positive affect toward Cheerios than Frosted Flakes, then I will naturally predict (and probably be correct when I do so) that you'll be more likely to buy Cheerios than Frosted Flakes when you go to the market. Furthermore, if I can do something to make your thoughts or feelings toward Frosted Flakes more positive, then your likelihood of buying that cereal instead of the other will also increase.

The principle of attitude consistency (that *for any given attitude object, the ABCs of affect, behavior, and cognition are normally in line with each other*) thus predicts that our attitudes (for instance, as measured via a self-report measure) are likely to *guide behavior*. Supporting this idea, meta-analyses have found that there is a significant and substantial positive correlation among the different components of attitudes, and that attitudes expressed on self-report measures do predict behavior (Glasman & Albarracín, 2006).

Although there is generally consistency between attitudes and behavior, the relationship is stronger in certain situations, for certain people, and for certain attitudes (Wicker, 1969). The *theory of planned behavior*, developed by Martin Fishbein and Izek Ajzen (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), outlined many of the important variables that affected the attitude-behavior relationship, and some of these factors are summarized in the list that follows this paragraph. It may not surprise you to hear that attitudes that are strong, in the sense that they are expressed quickly and confidently, predict our behavior better than do weak attitudes (Fazio, Powell, & Williams, 1989; Glasman & Albarracín, 2006). For example, Farc and Sagarin (2009) found that people who could more quickly complete questionnaires about their attitudes toward the politicians George Bush and John Kerry were also more likely to vote for the candidate that they had more positive attitudes toward in the 2004 presidential elections. The relationship between the responses on the questionnaires and voting behavior was weaker for those who completed the items more slowly.

- When attitudes are strong, rather than weak
- When we have a strong intention to perform the behavior
- When the attitude and the behavior both occur in similar social situations
- When the same components of the attitude (either affect or cognition) are accessible when the attitude is assessed and when the behavior is performed
- When the attitudes are measured at a specific, rather than a general, level
- For low self-monitors (rather than for high self-monitors)

Attitudes only predict behaviors well under certain conditions and for some people. The preceding list summarizes the factors that create a strong attitude-behavior relationship.

People who have strong attitudes toward an attitude object are also likely to have strong *intentions* to act on their attitudes, and the intention to engage in an activity is a strong predictor of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Imagine for a moment that your friend Sharina is trying to decide whether to recycle her used laptop batteries or just throw them away. We know that her attitude toward recycling is positive—she thinks she should do it—but we also know that recycling takes work. It's much easier to just throw the batteries away. Only if Sharina has a strong attitude toward recycling will she then have the necessary strong intentions to engage in the behavior that will make her recycle her batteries even when it is difficult to do.

The match between the social situations in which the attitudes are expressed and the behaviors are engaged in also matters, such that there is a greater attitude-behavior correlation when the social situations match. Imagine for a minute the case of Magritte, a 16-year-old high school student. Magritte tells her parents that she hates the idea of smoking cigarettes. Magritte's negative attitude toward smoking seems to be a strong one because she's thought a lot about it—she believes that cigarettes are dirty, expensive, and unhealthy. But how sure are you that Magritte's attitude will predict her behavior? Would you be willing to bet that she'd never try smoking when she's out with her friends?

You can see that the problem here is that Magritte's attitude is being expressed in one social situation (when she is with her parents) whereas the behavior (trying a cigarette) is going to occur in a very different social situation (when she is out with her friends). The relevant social norms are of course much different in the two situations. Magritte's friends might be able to convince her to try smoking, despite her initial negative attitude, when they entice her with peer pressure. Behaviors are more likely to be consistent with attitudes when the social situation in which the behavior occurs is similar to the situation in which the attitude is expressed (Ajzen, 1991; LaPiere, 1936).

Research Focus: Attitude-Behavior Consistency

Another variable that has an important influence on attitude-behavior consistency is the current cognitive accessibility of the underlying affective and cognitive components of the attitude. For example, if we assess the attitude in a situation in which people are thinking primarily about the attitude object in cognitive terms, and yet the behavior is performed in a situation in which the affective components of the attitude are more accessible, then the attitude-behavior relationship will be weak. Wilson and Schooler (1991) showed a similar type of effect by first choosing attitudes that they expected would be primarily determined by affect—attitudes toward five different types of strawberry jam. Then they asked a sample of college students to taste each of the jams. While they were tasting, one-half of the participants were instructed to think about the cognitive aspects of their attitudes to these jams—that is, to focus on the reasons they held their attitudes, whereas the other half of the participants were not given these instructions. Then all the students completed measures of their attitudes toward each of the jams.

Wilson and his colleagues then assessed the extent to which the attitudes expressed by the students correlated with taste ratings of the five jams as indicated by experts at *Consumer Reports*. They found that the attitudes expressed by the students correlated significantly higher with the expert ratings for the participants who had *not* listed their cognitions first. Wilson and his colleagues argued that this occurred because our liking of jams is primarily affectively determined—we either like them or we don't. And the students who simply rated the jams used their feelings to make their judgments. On the other hand, the students who were asked to list their thoughts about the jams had some extra information to use in making their judgments, but it was information that was not actually useful. Therefore, when these students used their thoughts about the jam to make the judgments, their judgments were less valid.

MacDonald, Zanna, and Fong (1996) showed male college students a video of two other college students, Mike and Rebecca, who were out on a date. However, according to random assignment to conditions, half of the men were shown the video while sober and the other half viewed the video after they had had several alcoholic drinks. In the video, Mike and Rebecca go to the campus bar and drink and dance. They then go to Rebecca's room, where they end up kissing passionately. Mike says that he doesn't have any condoms, but Rebecca says that she is on the pill.

At this point the film clip ends, and the male participants are asked about their likely behaviors if they had been Mike. Although all men indicated that having unprotected sex in this situation was foolish and irresponsible, the men who had been drinking alcohol were more likely to indicate that they would engage in sexual intercourse with Rebecca even without a condom. One interpretation of this study is that sexual behavior is determined by both cognitive factors ("I know that it is important to practice safe sex and so I should use a condom") and affective factors ("sex is enjoyable, I don't want to wait"). When the students were intoxicated at the time the behavior was to be performed, it seems likely the affective component of the attitude was a more important determinant of behavior than was the cognitive component.

One other type of "match" that has an important influence on the attitude-behavior relationship concerns how we measure the attitude and behavior. Attitudes predict behavior better when the attitude is measured at a level that is similar to the behavior to be predicted. Normally, the behavior is specific, so it is better to measure the attitude at a specific level too. For instance, if we measure cognitions at a very general level ("do you think it is important to use condoms?"; "are you a religious person?") we will not be as successful at predicting actual behaviors as we will be if we ask the question more specifically, at the level of behavior we

are interested in predicting ("do you think you will use a condom the next time you have sex?"; "how frequently do you expect to attend church in the next month?"). In general, more specific questions are better predictors of specific behaviors, and thus if we wish to accurately predict behaviors, we should remember to attempt to measure *specific* attitudes. One example of this principle is shown in Figure 5.1. Davidson and Jaccard (1979) found that they were much better able to predict whether women actually used birth control when they assessed the attitude at a more specific level.

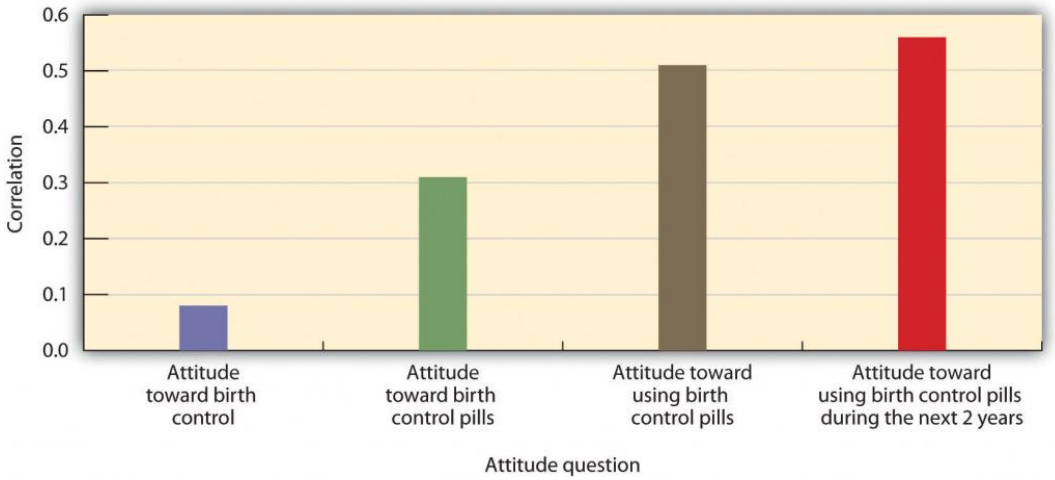


Figure 5.1 Predicting Behavior From Specific and Nonspecific Attitude Measures

Attitudes that are measured using more specific questions are more highly correlated with behavior than are attitudes measured using less specific questions. Data are from Davidson and Jaccard (1979).

Attitudes also predict behavior better for some people than for others. *Self-monitoring* refers to individual differences in the tendency to attend to social cues and to adjust one's behavior to one's social environment. To return to our example of Magritte, you might wonder whether she is the type of person who is likely to be persuaded by peer pressure because she is particularly concerned with being liked by others. If she is, then she's probably more likely to want to fit in with whatever her friends are doing, and she might try a cigarette if her friends offer her one. On the other hand, if Magritte is not particularly concerned about following the social norms of her friends, then she'll more likely be able to resist the persuasion. *High self-monitors* are those who tend to attempt to blend into the social situation in order to be liked; *low self-monitors* are those who are less likely to do so. You can see that, because they allow the social situation to influence their behaviors, the relationship between attitudes and behavior will be weaker for high self-monitors than it is for low self-monitors (Kraus, 1995).

Key Takeaways

- The term *attitude* refers to our relatively enduring evaluation of an attitude object.
- Our attitudes are inherited and also learned through direct and indirect experiences with the attitude objects.
- Some attitudes are more likely to be based on beliefs, some more likely to be based on feelings, and some more likely to be based on behaviors.
- Strong attitudes are important in the sense that we hold them with confidence, we do not change them very much, and we use them frequently to guide our actions.
- Although there is a general consistency between attitudes and behavior, the relationship is stronger in some situations than in others, for some measurements than for others, and for some people than for others.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider some of your attitudes toward people, products, or other attitude objects. Are your attitudes strong or weak? Are they determined more by affect or by cognition? How do the attitudes influence your behavior?
2. Consider a time when you acted on your own attitudes and a time when you did not act on your own attitudes. What factors do you think determined the difference?

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8.1.6: Changing Attitudes Through Persuasion

Learning Objectives

1. Outline how persuasion is determined by the choice of effective communicators and effective messages.
2. Review the conditions under which attitudes are best changed using spontaneous versus thoughtful strategies.
3. Summarize the variables that make us more or less resistant to persuasive appeals.

Every day we are bombarded by advertisements of every sort. The goal of these ads is to sell us cars, computers, video games, clothes, and even political candidates. The ads appear on billboards, website popup ads, TV infomercials, and…well, you name it! It's been estimated that the average American child views over 40,000 TV commercials every year and that over $400 billion is spent annually on advertising worldwide (Strasburger, 2001).

There is substantial evidence that advertising is effective in changing attitudes. After the R. J. Reynolds Company started airing its Joe Camel ads for cigarettes on TV in the 1980s, Camel cigarettes' share of sales among children increased dramatically. But persuasion can also have more positive outcomes. Persuasion is used to encourage people to donate to charitable causes, to volunteer to give blood, and to engage in healthy behaviors. The dramatic decrease in cigarette smoking (from about half of the U.S. population who smoked in 1970 to only about a quarter who smoke today) is due in large part to effective advertising campaigns.

Section 3.2 considers how we can change people's attitudes. If you are interested in learning how to persuade others, you may well get some ideas in this regard. If you think that advertisers and marketers have too much influence, then this section will help you understand how to resist such attempts at persuasion. Following the approach used by some of the earliest social psychologists and that still forms the basis of thinking about the power of communication, we will consider which *communicators* can deliver the most effective *messages* to which types of *message recipients* (Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield (1949).

Choosing Effective Communicators

In order to be effective persuaders, we must first get people's attention, then send an effective message to them, and then ensure that they process the message in the way we would like them to. Furthermore, to accomplish these goals, persuaders must take into consideration the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of their methods. Persuaders also must understand how the communication they are presenting relates to the message recipient—his or her motivations, desires, and goals.

Research has demonstrated that the same message will be more effective if is delivered by a more persuasive communicator. In general we can say that communicators are more effective when they help their recipients feel good about themselves—that is, by appealing to self-concern. For instance, attractive communicators are frequently more effective persuaders than are unattractive communicators. Attractive communicators create a positive association with the product they are trying to sell and put us in a good mood, which makes us more likely to accept their messages. And as the many marketers who include free gifts, such as mailing labels or small toys, in their requests for charitable donations well know, we are more likely to respond to communicators who offer us something personally beneficial.

We're also more persuaded by people who are similar to us in terms of opinions and values than by those whom we perceive as being different. This is of course why advertisements targeted at teenagers frequently use teenagers to present the message, and why advertisements targeted at the elderly use older communicators.

When communicators are perceived as attractive and similar to us, we tend to like them. And we also tend to trust the people that we like. The success of Tupperware parties, in which friends get together to buy products from other friends, may be due more to the fact that people like the "salesperson" than to the nature of the product. People such as the newscaster Walter Cronkite and the film stars Tom Hanks and Reese Witherspoon have been used as communicators for products in part because we see them as trustworthy and thus likely to present an unbiased message. Trustworthy communicators are effective because they allow us to feel good about ourselves when we accept their message, often without critically evaluating its content (Priester & Petty, 2003).



People such as the newscaster Walter Cronkite and the film stars Tom Hanks and Reese Witherspoon have been used as communicators for products in part because we see them as trustworthy and thus likely to present an unbiased message. Wikimedia Commons – public domain; Wikimedia Commons – public domain; Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

Expert communicators may sometimes be perceived as trustworthy because they know a lot about the product they are selling. When a doctor recommends that we take a particular drug, we are likely to be influenced because we know that he or she has expertise about the effectiveness of drugs. It is no surprise that advertisers use race car drivers to sell cars and basketball players to sell athletic shoes.

Although expertise comes in part from having knowledge, it can also be communicated by how one presents a message. Communicators who speak confidently, quickly, and in a straightforward way are seen as more expert than those who speak in a more hesitating and slower manner. Taking regular speech and speeding it up by deleting very small segments of it, so that it sounds the same but actually goes faster, makes the same communication more persuasive (MacLachlan & Siegel, 1980; Moore, Hausknecht, & Thamodaran, 1986). This is probably in part because faster speech makes the communicator seem more like an expert but also because faster speech reduces the listener's ability to come up with counterarguments as he or she listens to the message (Megehee, Dobie, & Grant, 2003). Effective speakers frequently use this technique, and some of the best persuaders are those who speak quickly.

Although expert communicators are expected to know a lot about the product they are endorsing, they may not be seen as trustworthy if their statements seem to be influenced by external causes. People who are seen to be arguing in their own self-interest (for instance, an expert witness who is paid by the lawyers in a case or a celebrity who is paid for her endorsement of a product) may be ineffective because we may discount their communications (Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978; Wood & Eagly, 1981). On the other hand, when a person presents a message that goes *against* external causes, for instance by arguing in favor of an opinion to a person who is known to disagree with it, we see the internal states (that the individual really believes in the message he or she is expressing) as even more powerful.

Communicators also may be seen as biased if they present only one side of an issue while completely ignoring the potential problems or counterarguments to the message. In these cases people who are informed about both sides of the topic may see the communicator as attempting to unfairly influence them.

Although we are generally very aware of the potential that communicators may deliver messages that are inaccurate or designed to influence us, and we are able to discount messages that come from sources that we do not view as trustworthy, there is one interesting situation in which we may be fooled by communicators. This occurs when a message is presented by someone that we perceive as untrustworthy. When we first hear that person's communication we appropriately discount it and it therefore has little influence on our opinions. However, over time there is a tendency to remember the *content* of a communication to a greater extent than we remember the *source* of the communication. As a result, we may forget over time to discount the remembered message. This *attitude change that occurs over time* is known as the sleeper effect (Kumkale & Albarracín, 2004).

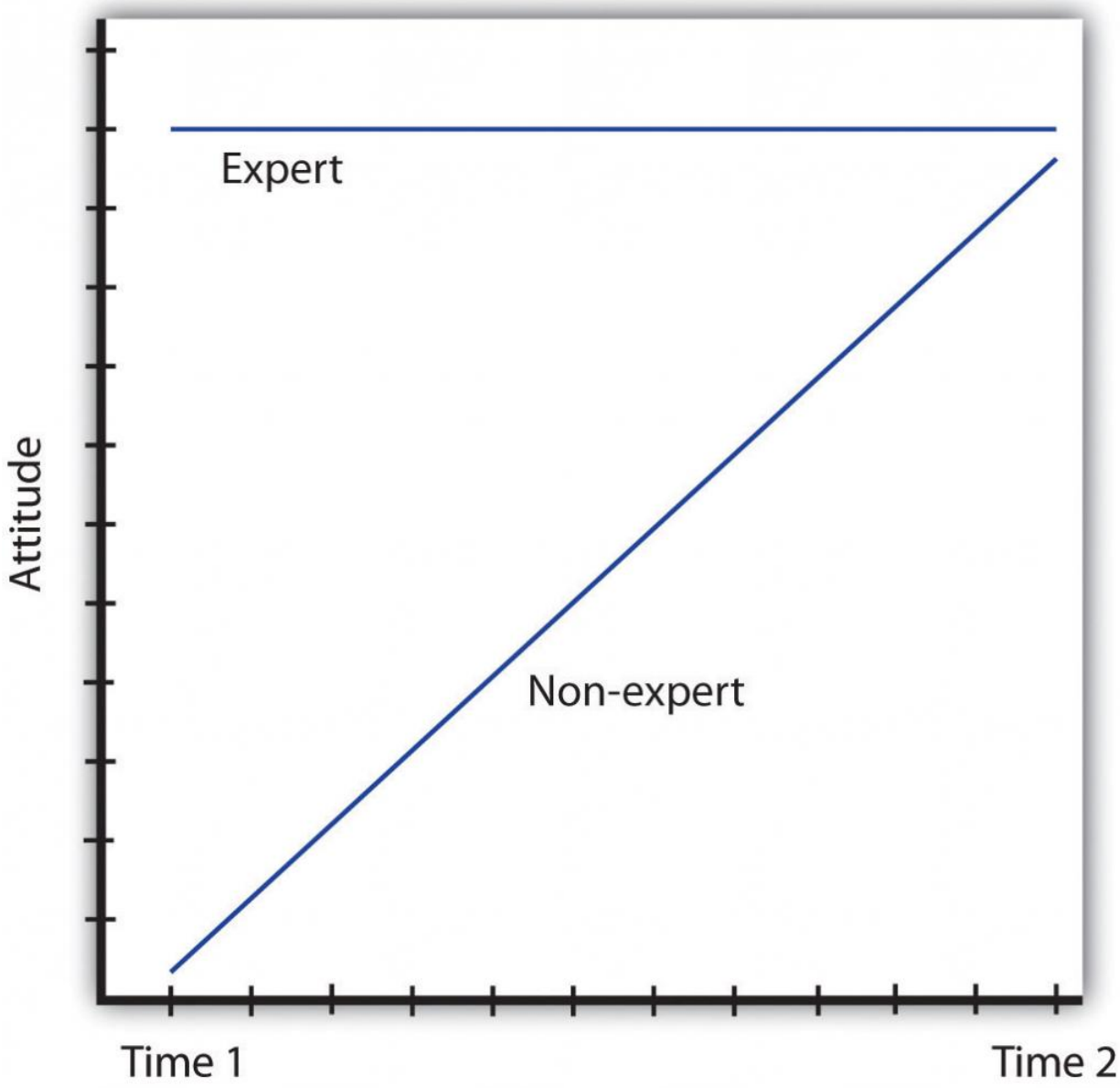


Figure 5.2 The Sleeper Effect

The *sleeper effect* occurs when we initially discount the message given by an untrustworthy or nonexpert communicator but, over time, we remember the content of the message and forget its source. The result is attitude change in the direction of the initially discounted message.

Perhaps you've experienced the sleeper effect. Once, I told my friends a story that I had read about one of my favorite movie stars. Only later did I remember that I had read the story while I was waiting in the supermarket checkout line, and that I had read it in the *National Enquirer*! I knew that the story was probably false because the newspaper is considered unreliable, but I had initially forgotten to discount that fact because I did not remember the source of the information. The sleeper effect is diagrammed in Figure 5.2.

Creating Effective Communications

Once we have chosen a communicator, the next step is to determine what type of message we should have him or her deliver. Neither social psychologists nor advertisers are so naïve as to think that simply presenting a strong message is sufficient. No matter how good the message is, it will not be effective unless people pay attention to it, understand it, accept it, and incorporate it into their self-concept. This is why we attempt to choose good communicators to present our ads in the first place, and why we tailor our communications to get people to process them the way we want them to.

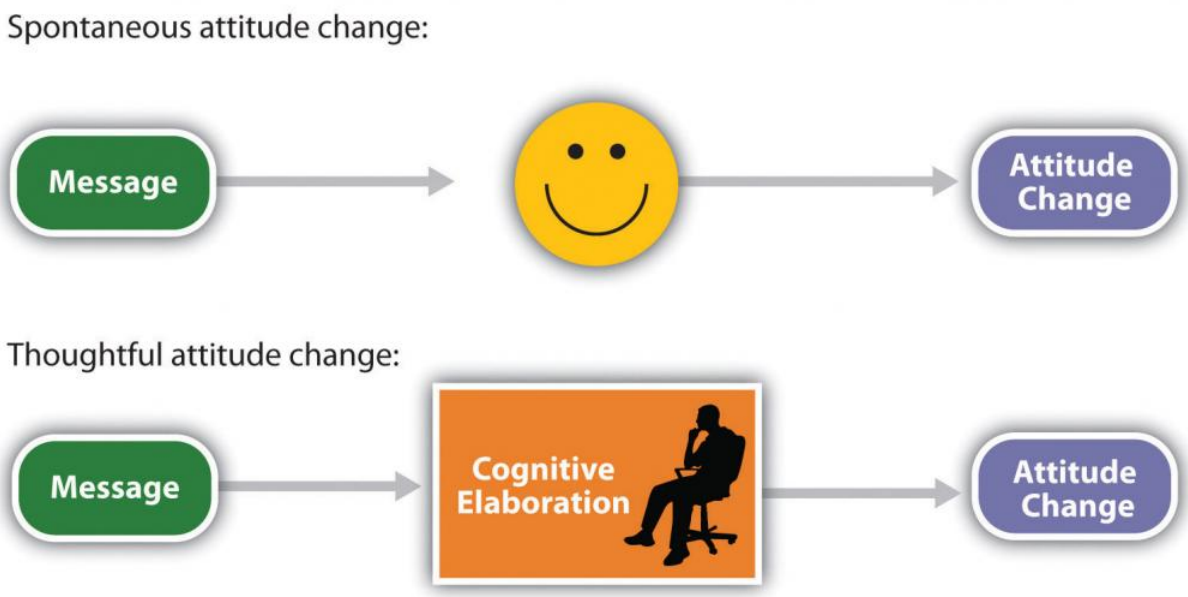


Figure 5.3

Spontaneous attitude change occurs as a direct or affective response to the message, whereas thoughtful attitude change is based on our cognitive elaboration of the message.

The messages that we deliver may be processed either *spontaneously* (other terms for this include *peripherally* or *heuristically*—Chen & Chaiken, 1999; Petty & Wegener, 1999) or *thoughtfully* (other terms for this include *centrally* or *systematically*). Spontaneous processing is direct, quick, and often involves affective responses to the message. Thoughtful processing, on the other hand, is more controlled and involves a more careful cognitive elaboration of the meaning of the message (Figure 5.3). The route that we take when we process a communication is important in determining whether or not a particular message changes attitudes.

Spontaneous Message Processing

Because we are bombarded with so many persuasive messages—and because we do not have the time, resources, or interest to process every message fully—we frequently process messages spontaneously. In these cases, if we are influenced by the communication at all, it is likely that it is the relatively unimportant characteristics of the advertisement, such as the likeability or attractiveness of the communicator or the music playing in the ad, that will influence us.

If we find the communicator cute, if the music in the ad puts us in a good mood, or if it appears that other people around us like the ad, then we may simply accept the message without thinking about it very much (Giner-Sorolla & Chaiken, 1997). In these cases, we engage in spontaneous message processing, in which *we accept a persuasion attempt because we focus on whatever is most obvious or enjoyable, without much attention to the message itself*. Shelley Chaiken (1980) found that students who were not highly involved in a topic, because it did not affect them personally, were more persuaded by a likeable communicator than by an unlikeable one, regardless of whether the communicator presented a good argument for the topic or a poor one. On the other hand, students who were more involved in the decision were more persuaded by the better than by the poorer message, regardless of whether the communicator was likeable or not—they were not fooled by the likeability of the communicator.

You might be able to think of some advertisements that are likely to be successful because they create spontaneous processing of the message by basing their persuasive attempts around creating emotional responses in the listeners. In these cases the advertisers use associational learning to associate the positive features of the ad with the product. Television commercials are often humorous, and automobile ads frequently feature beautiful people having fun driving beautiful cars. The slogans “The joy of cola!” “Coke adds life!” and “Be a Pepper!” are good ads in part because they successfully create positive affect in the listener.

In some cases emotional ads may be effective because they lead us to watch or listen to the ad rather than simply change the channel or doing something else. The clever and funny TV ads that are shown during the Super Bowl broadcast every year are likely to be effective because we watch them, remember them, and talk about them with others. In this case the positive affect makes the ads more salient, causing them to grab our attention. But emotional ads also take advantage of the role of affect in information processing. We tend to like things more when we are in good moods, and—because positive affect indicates that things

are OK—we process information less carefully when we are in good moods. Thus the spontaneous approach to persuasion is particularly effective when people are happy (Sinclair, Mark, & Clore, 1994), and advertisers try to take advantage of this fact.

Another type of ad that is based on emotional responses is the one that uses fear appeals, such as ads that show pictures of deadly automobile accidents to encourage seatbelt use or images of lung cancer surgery to decrease smoking. By and large, fearful messages are persuasive (Das, de Wit, & Stroebe, 2003; Perloff, 2003; Witte & Allen, 2000). Again, this is due in part to the fact that the emotional aspects of the ads make them salient and lead us to attend to and remember them. And fearful ads may also be framed in a way that leads us to focus on the salient negative outcomes that have occurred for one particular individual. When we see an image of a person who is jailed for drug use, we may be able to empathize with that person and imagine how we would feel if it happened to us. Thus this ad may be more effective than more "statistical" ads stating the base rates of the number of people who are jailed for drug use every year.

Fearful ads also focus on self-concern, and advertisements that are framed in a way that suggests that a behavior will harm the self are more effective than the same messages that are framed more positively. Banks, Salovey, Greener, and Rothman (1995) found that a message that emphasized the negative aspects of not getting a breast cancer screening mammogram ("not getting a mammogram can cost you your life") was more effective than a similar message that emphasized the positive aspects ("getting a mammogram can save your life") in getting women to have a mammogram over the next year. These findings are consistent with the general idea that the brain responds more strongly to negative affect than it does to positive affect (Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998).

Although laboratory studies generally find that fearful messages are effective in persuasion, they have some problems that may make them less useful in real-world advertising campaigns (Hastings, Stead, & webb, 2004). Fearful messages may create a lot of anxiety and therefore turn people off to the message (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005). For instance, people who know that smoking cigarettes is dangerous but who cannot seem to quit may experience particular anxiety about their smoking behaviors. Fear messages are more effective when people feel that they know how to rectify the problem, have the ability to actually do so, and take responsibility for the change. Without some feelings of self-efficacy, people do not know how to respond to the fear (Aspinwall, Kemeny, Taylor, & Schneider, 1991). Thus if you want to scare people into changing their behavior, it may be helpful if you also give them some ideas about how to do so, so that they feel like they have the ability to take action to make the changes (Passyn & Sujan, 2006).



Source: www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/Labeling/ucm259214.htm#High_Resolution_Image_Formats

Thoughtful Message Processing

When we process messages only spontaneously, our feelings are more likely to be important, but when we process messages thoughtfully, cognition prevails. When we care about the topic, find it relevant, and have plenty of time to spend thinking about the communication, we are likely to process the message more deliberatively, carefully, and thoughtfully (Petty & Briñol, 2008). In this case we *elaborate* on the communication by considering the pros and cons of the message and questioning the validity of the communicator and the message. Thoughtful message processing*occurs when we think about how the message relates to our own beliefs and goals and involves our careful consideration of whether the persuasion attempt is valid or invalid.*

When an advertiser presents a message that he or she hopes will be processed thoughtfully, the goal is to create positive cognitions about the attitude object in the listener. The communicator mentions positive features and characteristics of the product and at the same time attempts to downplay the negative characteristics. When people are asked to list their thoughts about a product while they are listening to, or right after they hear, a message, those who list more positive thoughts also express more positive attitudes toward the product than do those who list more negative thoughts (Petty & Briñol, 2008). Because the thoughtful processing of the

message bolsters the attitude, thoughtful processing helps us develop strong attitudes, which are therefore resistant to counterpersuasion (Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981).

Which Route Do We Take: Thoughtful or Spontaneous?

Both thoughtful and spontaneous messages can be effective, but it is important to know which is likely to be better in which situation and for which people. When we can motivate people to process our message carefully and thoughtfully, then we are going to be able to present our strong and persuasive arguments with the expectation that our audience will attend to them. If we can get the listener to process these strong arguments thoughtfully, then the attitude change will likely be strong and long lasting. On the other hand, when we expect our listeners to process only spontaneously—for instance, if they don't care too much about our message or if they are busy doing other things—then we do not need to worry so much about the content of the message itself; even a weak (but interesting) message can be effective in this case. Successful advertisers tailor their messages to fit the expected characteristics of their audiences.

In addition to being motivated to process the message, we must also have the ability to do so. If the message is too complex to understand, we may rely on spontaneous cues, such as the perceived trustworthiness or expertise of the communicator (Hafer, Reynolds, & Obertynski, 1996), and ignore the content of the message. When experts are used to attempt to persuade people—for instance, in complex jury trials—the messages that these experts give may be very difficult to understand. In these cases the jury members may rely on the perceived expertise of the communicator rather than his or her message, being persuaded in a relatively spontaneous way. In other cases we may not be able to process the information thoughtfully because we are distracted or tired—in these cases even weak messages can be effective, again because we process them spontaneously (Petty, Wells & Brock, 1976).

Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman (1981) showed how different motivations may lead to either spontaneous or thoughtful processing. In their research, college students heard a message suggesting that the administration at their college was proposing to institute a new comprehensive exam that all students would need to pass in order to graduate and then rated the degree to which they were favorable toward the idea. The researchers manipulated three independent variables:

- **Message strength.** The message contained either *strong arguments* (persuasive data and statistics about the positive effects of the exams at other universities) or *weak arguments* (relying only on individual quotations and personal opinions).
- **Source expertise.** The message was supposedly prepared either by an *expert source* (the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, which was chaired by a professor of education at Princeton University) or by a *nonexpert source* (a class at a local high school).
- **Personal relevance.** The students were told either that the new exam would begin before they graduated (*high personal relevance*) or that it would not begin until after they had already graduated (*low personal relevance*).

As you can see in Figure 5.4, Petty and his colleagues found two interaction effects. The top panel of the figure shows that the students in the high personal relevance condition (left side) were not particularly influenced by the expertise of the source, whereas the students in the low personal relevance condition (right side) were. On the other hand, as you can see in the bottom panel, the students who were in the high personal relevance condition (left side) were strongly influenced by the quality of the argument, but the low personal involvement students (right side) were not.

These findings fit with the idea that when the issue was important, the students engaged in thoughtful processing of the message itself. When the message was largely irrelevant, they simply used the expertise of the source without bothering to think about the message.

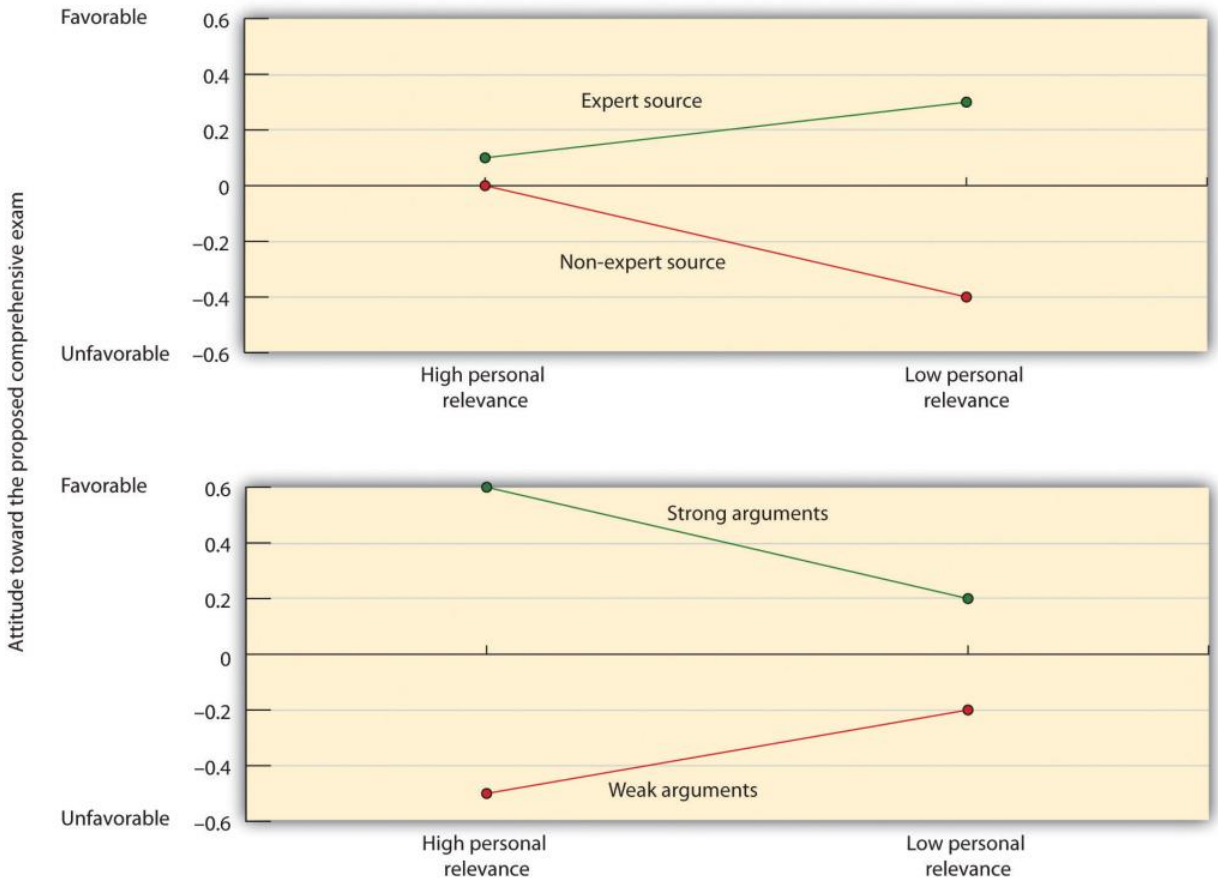


Figure 5.4

Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman (1981) found that students for whom an argument was not personally relevant based their judgments on the expertise of the source (spontaneous processing), whereas students for whom the decision was more relevant were more influenced by the quality of the message (thoughtful processing).

Because both thoughtful and spontaneous approaches can be successful, advertising campaigns, such as those used by the Obama presidential campaign, carefully make use of both spontaneous and thoughtful messages. In some cases, the messages showed Obama smiling, shaking hands with people around him, and kissing babies; in other ads Obama was shown presenting his plans for energy efficiency and climate change in more detail.

Preventing Persuasion

To this point we have focused on techniques designed to change attitudes. But it is also useful to develop techniques that *prevent* attitude change. If you are hoping that Magritte will never puff that first cigarette, then you might be interested in knowing what her parents might be able to do to prevent it from happening.

One approach to improving an individual's ability to resist persuasion is to help the person create a strong attitude. Strong attitudes are more difficult to change than are weak attitudes, and we are more likely to act on our strong attitudes. This suggests that Magritte's parents might want help Magritte consider all the reasons that she should not smoke and develop strong negative affect about smoking. As Magritte's negative thoughts and feelings about smoking become more well-defined and more integrated into the self-concept, they should have a bigger influence on her behavior.

One method of increasing attitude strength involves forewarning: *giving people a chance to develop a resistance to persuasion by reminding them that they might someday receive a persuasive message, and allowing them to practice how they will respond to influence attempts* (Sagarin & Wood, 2007). Magritte's parents might want to try the forewarning approach. After the forewarning, when Magritte hears the smoking message from her peers, she may be less influenced by it because she was aware ahead of time that the persuasion would likely occur and had already considered how to resist it.

Forewarning seems to be particularly effective when the message that is expected to follow attacks an attitude that we care a lot about. In these cases the forewarning prepares us for action—we bring up our defenses to maintain our existing beliefs. When we don't care much about the topic, on the other hand, we may simply change our belief before the appeal actually comes (Wood & Quinn, 2003).

Forewarning can be effective in helping people respond to persuasive messages that they will receive later.

A similar approach is to help build up the cognitive component of the attitude by presenting a weak attack on the existing attitude with the goal of helping the person create counterarguments about a persuasion attempt that is expected to come in the future. Just as an inoculation against the flu gives us a small dose of the influenza virus that helps prevent a bigger attack later, giving Magritte a weak argument to persuade her to smoke cigarettes can help her develop ways to resist the real attempts when they come in the future. This procedure—known as inoculation—*involves building up defenses against persuasion by mildly attacking the attitude position* (Compton & Pfau, 2005; McGuire, 1961). We would begin by telling Magritte the reasons that her friends might think that she *should* smoke (for instance, because everyone is doing it and it makes people look "cool"), therefore allowing her to create some new defenses against persuasion. Thinking about the potential arguments that she might receive and preparing the corresponding counterarguments will make the attitude stronger and more resistant to subsequent change attempts.

One difficulty with forewarning and inoculation attempts is that they may boomerang. If we feel that another person—for instance, a person who holds power over us—is attempting to take away our freedom to make our own decisions, we may respond with strong emotion, completely ignore the persuasion attempt, and perhaps even engage in the opposite behavior. Perhaps you can remember a time when you felt like your parents or someone else who had some power over you put too much pressure on you, and you rebelled against them.

The strong emotional response that we experience when we feel that our freedom of choice is being taken away when we expect that we should have choice is known as psychological reactance (Brehm, 1966; Miron & Brehm, 2006). If Magritte's parents are too directive in their admonitions about not smoking, she may feel that they do not trust her to make her own decisions and are attempting to make them for her. In this case she may experience reactance and become *more* likely to start smoking. Erceg-Hurn and Steed (2011) found that the graphic warning images that are placed on cigarette packs could create reactance in people who viewed them, potentially reducing the warnings' effectiveness in convincing people to stop smoking.

Given the extent to which our judgments and behaviors are frequently determined by processes that occur outside of our conscious awareness, you might wonder whether it is possible to persuade people to change their attitudes or to get people to buy products or engage in other behaviors using subliminal advertising. Subliminal advertising occurs when a message, such as an advertisement or another image of a brand, is presented to the consumer without the person being aware that a message has been presented—for instance, by flashing messages quickly in a TV show, an advertisement, or a movie (Theus, 1994).

Does Subliminal Advertising Work?

If it were effective, subliminal advertising would have some major advantages for advertisers because it would allow them to promote their product without directly interrupting the consumer's activity and without the consumer knowing that he or she is being persuaded (Trappey, 1996). People cannot counterargue with, or attempt to avoid being influenced by, messages that they do not know they have received and this may make subliminal advertising particularly effective. Due to fears that people may be influenced to buy products out of their awareness, subliminal advertising has been legally banned in many countries, including Australia, Great Britain, and the United States.

Some research has suggested that subliminal advertising may be effective. Karremans, Stroebe, and Claus (2006) had Dutch college students view a series of computer trials in which a string of letters such as *BBBBBBBBB* or *BBBbBBBBB* was presented on the screen and the students were asked to pay attention to whether or not the strings contained a small *b*. However, immediately before each of the letter strings, the researchers presented either the name of a drink that is popular in Holland ("Lipton Ice") or a control string containing the same letters as Lipton Ice ("Npeic Tol"). The priming words were presented so quickly (for only about 1/50th of a second) that the participants could not see them.

Then the students were asked to indicate their intention to drink Lipton Ice by answering questions such as "If you would sit on a terrace now, how likely is it that you would order Lipton Ice?" and also to indicate how thirsty they were at this moment. The researchers found that the students who had been exposed to the Lipton Ice primes were significantly more likely to say that they would drink Lipton Ice than were those who had been exposed to the control words, but that this was only true for the participants who said that they were currently thirsty.

On the other hand, other research has not supported the effectiveness of subliminal advertising. Charles Trappey (1996) conducted a meta-analysis in which he combined 23 research studies that had tested the influence of subliminal advertising on consumer choice. The results of his meta-analysis showed that subliminal advertising had a "negligible effect on consumer choice." Saegert (1987) concluded that "marketing should quit giving subliminal advertising the benefit of the doubt" (p. 107), arguing that the influences of subliminal stimuli are usually so weak that they are normally overshadowed by the person's own decision making about the behavior.

Even if a subliminal or subtle advertisement is perceived, previous experience with the product or similar products—or even unrelated, more salient stimuli at the moment—may easily overshadow any effect the subliminal message would have had (Moore, 1988). That is, even if we do perceive the "hidden" message, our prior attitudes or our current situation will likely have a stronger influence on our choices, potentially nullifying any effect the subliminal message would have had.

Taken together, the evidence for the effectiveness of subliminal advertising is weak and its effects may be limited to only some people and only some conditions. You probably don't have to worry too much about being subliminally persuaded in your everyday life even if subliminal ads are allowed in your country. Of course, although subliminal advertising is not that effective, there are plenty of other indirect advertising techniques that are. Many ads for automobiles and alcoholic beverages have sexual connotations, which indirectly (even if not subliminally) associate these positive features with their products. And there are the ever more frequent "product placement" techniques, where images of brands (cars, sodas, electronics, and so forth) are placed on websites and in popular TV shows and movies.

Key Takeaways

- Advertising is effective in changing attitudes, and principles of social psychology can help us understand when and how advertising works.
- Social psychologists study which communicators can deliver the most effective messages to which types of message recipients.
- Communicators are more effective when they help their recipients feel good about themselves. Attractive, similar, trustworthy, and expert communicators are examples of effective communicators.
- Attitude change that occurs over time, particularly when we no longer discount the impact of a low-credibility communicator, is known as the sleeper effect.
- The messages that we deliver may be processed either spontaneously or thoughtfully. When we are processing messages only spontaneously, our feelings are more likely to be important, but when we process the message thoughtfully, cognition prevails.
- Both thoughtful and spontaneous messages can be effective, in different situations and for different people.
- One approach to improving an individual's ability to resist persuasion is to help the person create a strong attitude. Procedures such as forewarning and inoculation can help increase attitude strength and thus reduce subsequent persuasion.
- Taken together, the evidence for the effectiveness of subliminal advertising is weak, and its effects may be limited to only some people and only some conditions.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Reconsider the effectiveness of the Obama presidential campaign in terms of the principles of persuasion that we have discussed.
2. Find and discuss examples of web or TV ads that make use of the principles discussed in this section.
3. Visit the Joe Chemo site (http://www.joechemo.org/about.htm), designed to highlight and counterargue the negative effects of the Joe Camel cigarette ads. Create a presentation that summarizes the influence of cigarette ads on children.
4. Based on our discussion of resistance to persuasion, what techniques would you use to help a child resist the pressure to start smoking or using recreational drugs?

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8.1.7: Changing Attitudes by Changing Behavior

Learning Objectives

1. Outline the principles of self-perception and explain how they can account for the influences of behavior on attitude.
2. Outline the principles of cognitive dissonance and explain how they can account for the influences of behavior on attitude.

Although it might not have surprised you to hear that we can often predict people's behaviors if we know their thoughts and their feelings about the attitude object, you might be more surprised to find that our actions also have an influence on our thoughts and feelings. It makes sense that if I like Cheerios, I'll buy them, because my thoughts and feelings about a product influence my behavior. But will my attitudes toward Frosted Flakes become more positive if I decide—for whatever reason—to buy them instead of Cheerios?

It turns out that if we engage in a behavior, and particularly one that we had not expected that we would have, our thoughts and feelings toward that behavior are likely to change. This might not seem intuitive, but it represents another example of how the principles of social psychology—in this case the principle of attitude consistency—lead us to make predictions that wouldn't otherwise be that obvious.

Imagine that one Tuesday evening in the middle of the semester you see your friend Joachim. He's just finished his dinner and tells you that he's planning to head home to study and work on a term paper. When you see him the next day, however, he seems a bit shaken. It turns out that instead of going home to study, Joachim spent the entire evening listening to music at a rock club in town. He says that he had a great time, stayed up late to watch the last set, and didn't get home until the crack of dawn. And he woke up so late this morning that he missed his first two classes.

You might imagine that Joachim might be feeling some uncertainty and perhaps some regret about his unexpected behavior the night before. Although he knows that it is important to study and to get to his classes on time, he nevertheless realizes that, at least in this case, he neglected his schoolwork in favor of another activity. Joachim seems to be wondering why he, who knows how important school is, engaged in this behavior after he promised himself that he was going home to study. Let's see if we can use the principles of attitude consistency to help us understand how Joachim might respond to his unexpected behavior and how his attitudes toward listening to music and studying might follow from it.

Self-Perception Involves Inferring Our Beliefs From Our Behaviors

People have an avid interest in understanding the causes of behavior, both theirs and others, and doing so helps us meet the important goals of other-concern and self-concern. If we can better understand how and why the other people around us act the way they do, then we will have a better chance of avoiding harm from others and a better chance of getting those other people to cooperate with and like us. And if we have a better idea of understanding the causes of our own behavior, we can better work to keep that behavior in line with our preferred plans and goals.

In some cases people may be somewhat unsure about their attitudes toward different attitude objects. For instance, perhaps Joachim is a bit unsure about his attitude toward schoolwork versus listening to music (and this uncertainty certainly seems to be increasing in light of his recent behavior). Might Joachim look at his own behavior to help him determine his thoughts and feelings, just as he might look at the behavior of others to understand why they act the way that they do? Self-perception occurs *when we use our own behavior as a guide to help us determine our own thoughts and feelings* (Bem, 1972; Olson & Stone, 2005).

Research Focus

Looking at Our Own Behavior to Determine Our Attitudes

Eliot Aronson and J. Merrill Carlsmith (1963) conducted an experiment to determine whether young children might look at their own behavior to help determine their attitudes toward toys. In their research, they first had the children rate the attractiveness of several toys. They then chose a toy that a child had just indicated he or she really wanted to play with and—this was rather mean—told that child he or she could not play with that toy. Furthermore, and according to random assignment to conditions, half of the children were threatened with mild punishment if they disobeyed and the other half were threatened with severe punishment. In the mild threat condition the experimenter said, "I don't want you to play with the toy. If you played with it, I would be annoyed," whereas in the harsh threat condition the experimenter said, "I don't want you to play with the toy. If you played with it, I would be very angry. I would have to take all of my toys and go home and never come

back again." The experimenter then left the room for a few minutes to give the children the time and opportunity to play with the other toys and to resist the temptation of playing with the forbidden toy, while watching the children through a one-way mirror.

It turned out that both the harsh and the mild threat were sufficient to prevent the children from playing with the forbidden toy—none of the children actually did so. Nevertheless, when the experimenter returned to the room and asked each child to again rate how much he or she liked the forbidden toy, the children who had received the harsh threat rated the toy significantly more positively than the children who had received the mild threat. Furthermore, the children who had only received the mild threat actually rated the forbidden toy less positively than they had at the beginning of the experiment. And this change was long lasting. Even when tested several weeks later, children still showed these changes (Freedman, 1965).

The results of this study indicate that the children's self-perceptions of their behaviors influenced their attitudes toward the toys. Assume for a moment that the children were a bit unsure about how much they liked the toy that they did not play with and that they needed some information to determine their beliefs. The children in the harsh threat condition had a strong external reason for not having played with the toy—they were going to get into really big trouble if they did. Because these children likely saw the social situation as the cause of their behavior, they found it easy to believe that they still liked the toy a lot. For the children in the mild threat condition, however, the external reasons for their behavior were not so apparent—they had only been asked not to play with the toy. These children were more likely to come to the conclusion that their behavior was caused by internal, person factors—that they did not play with the toy simply because they did not like it that much.

We can use the principles of self-perception to help understand how Joachim is interpreting his behavior of staying out all night at the club rather than studying. When Joachim looks at this behavior, he may start to wonder why he engaged in it. One answer is that the social situation caused the behavior—he might decide that the band he heard last night was so fantastic that he simply had to go hear them and could not possibly have left the club early. Blaming the situation for the behavior allows him to avoid blaming himself for it and to avoid facing the fact that he found listening to music more important than his schoolwork. But the fact that Joachim is a bit worried about his unusual behavior suggests that he, at least in part, might be starting to wonder about his own motivations.

Perhaps you have experienced the effects of self-perception. Have you ever found yourself becoming more convinced about an argument you were making as you heard yourself making it? Or did you ever realize how thirsty you must have been as you quickly drank a big glass of water? Research has shown that self-perception occurs regularly and in many different domains. For instance, Gary Wells and Richard Petty (1980) found that people who were asked to shake their heads up and down rather than sideways while reading arguments favoring or opposing tuition increases at their school ended up agreeing with the arguments more, and Daryl Bem (1965) found that when people were told by the experimenter to say that certain cartoons were funny, they ended up actually finding those cartoons funnier. It appears in these cases that people looked at their own behavior: If they moved their head up and down or said that the cartoons were funny, they figured that they must agree with the arguments and like the cartoon.

Creating Insufficient and Oversufficient Justification

You may recall that one common finding in social psychology is that people frequently do not realize the extent to which behavior is influenced by the social situation. Although this is particularly true for the behavior of others, in some cases it may apply to understanding our own behavior as well. This means that, at least in some cases, we may believe that we have chosen to engage in a behavior for personal reasons, even though external, situational factors have actually led us to it. Consider again the children who did not play with the forbidden toy in the Aronson and Carlsmith study, even though they were given only a mild reason for not doing so. Although these children were actually led to avoid the toy by the power of the situation (they certainly would have played with it if the experimenter hadn't told them not to), they frequently concluded that the decision was a personal choice and ended up believing that the toy was not that fun after all. *When the social situation actually causes our behavior, but we do not realize that the social situation was the cause*, we call the phenomenon insufficient justification. Insufficient justification occurs when the threat or reward is actually sufficient to get the person to engage in or to avoid a behavior, but the threat or reward is insufficient to allow the person to conclude that the situation caused the behavior.

Although insufficient justification leads people to like something less because they (incorrectly) infer that they *did not* engage in a behavior due to *internal* reasons, it is also possible that the opposite may occur. People may in some cases come to like a task less when they perceive that they *did* engage in it for *external* reasons. Overjustification*occurs when we view our behavior as caused by*

the situation, leading us to discount the extent to which our behavior was actually caused by our own interest in it (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Lepper & Greene, 1978).

Mark Lepper and his colleagues (Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973) studied the overjustification phenomenon by leading some children to think that they engaged in an activity for a reward rather than because they simply enjoyed it. First, they placed some fun felt-tipped markers into the classroom of the children they were studying. The children loved the markers and played with them right away. Then, the markers were taken out of the classroom and the children were given a chance to play with the markers individually at an experimental session with the researcher. At the research session, the children were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups. One group of children (the *expected reward condition*) was told that if they played with the markers they would receive a good drawing award. A second group (the *unexpected reward condition*) also played with the markers and got the award—but they were not told ahead of time that they would be receiving the award (it came as a surprise after the session). The third group (the *no reward condition*) played with the markers too but got no award.

Then, the researchers placed the markers back in the classroom and observed how much the children in each of the three groups played with them. The results are shown in Figure 5.5. The fascinating result was that the children who had been led to expect a reward for playing with the markers during the experimental session played with the markers *less* at the second session than they had at the first session. Expecting to receive the award at the session had undermined their initial interest in the markers.

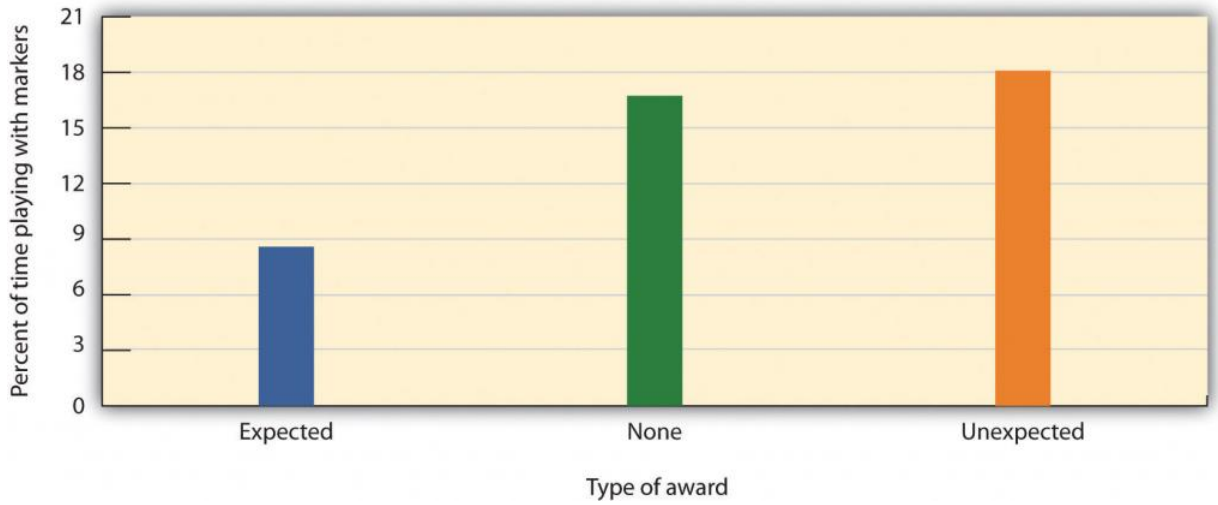


Figure 5.5 Undermining Initial Interest in an Activity

Children who had been expecting to receive a reward when they played with the fun markers played less with them in their free play period than did children who received no reward or an unexpected reward—their initial interest had been undermined by the expected reward. Data are from Lepper, Greene, and Nisbett (1973).

Although this might not seem logical at first, it is exactly what is expected on the basis of the principle of overjustification. When the children had to choose whether or not to play with the markers when the markers reappeared in the classroom, they based their decision on their own prior behavior. The children in the no reward condition group and the children in the unexpected reward condition group realized that they played with the markers because they liked them. Children in the expected award condition group, however, remembered that they were promised a reward for the activity before they played with the markers the last time. These children were more likely to draw the inference that they play with the markers mostly for the external reward, and because they did not expect to get any reward for playing with the markers in the classroom they discounted the possibility that they enjoyed playing the markers because they liked them. As a result, they played less frequently with the markers in comparison to the children in the other groups.

This research suggests that, although giving rewards may in many cases lead us to perform an activity more frequently or with more effort, reward may not always increase our *liking* for the activity. In some cases reward may actually make us like an activity less than we did before we were rewarded for it. And this outcome is particularly likely when the reward is perceived as an obvious attempt on the part of others to get us to do something. When children are given money by their parents to get good grades in school, they may improve their school performance to gain the reward. But at the same time their liking for school may decrease. On the other hand, rewards that are seen as more internal to the activity, such as rewards that praise us, remind us of our achievements in the domain, and make us feel good about ourselves as a result of our accomplishments, are more likely to be

effective in increasing not only the performance of, but also the liking of, the activity (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Hulleman, Durik, Schweigert, & Harackiewicz, 2008).

In short, when we use harsh punishments we may prevent a behavior from occurring. However, because the person sees that it is the punishment that is controlling the behavior, the person's attitudes may not change. Parents who wish to encourage their children to share their toys or to practice the piano therefore would be wise to provide "just enough" external incentive. Perhaps a consistent reminder of the appropriateness of the activity would be enough to engage the activity, making a stronger reprimand or other punishment unnecessary. Similarly, when we use extremely positive rewards, we may increase the behavior but at the same time undermine the person's interest in the activity.

The problem, of course, is finding the right balance between reinforcement and overreinforcement. If we want our child to avoid playing in the street, and if we provide harsh punishment for disobeying, we may prevent the behavior but not change the attitude. The child may not play in the street while we are watching but do so when we leave. Providing less punishment is more likely to lead the child to actually change his or her beliefs about the appropriateness of the behavior, but the punishment must be enough to prevent the undesired behavior in the first place. The moral is clear: If we want someone to develop a strong attitude, we should use the smallest reward or punishment that is effective in producing the desired behavior.

The Experience of Cognitive Dissonance Can Create Attitude Change

Let's return once more to our friend Joachim and imagine that we now discover that over the next two weeks he has spent virtually every night at clubs listening to music rather than studying. And these behaviors are starting to have some severe consequences: He just found out that he's failed his biology midterm. How will he ever explain *that* to his parents? What were at first relatively small discrepancies between self-concept and behavior are starting to snowball, and they are starting to have more affective consequences. Joachim is realizing that he's in big trouble—the inconsistencies between his prior attitudes about the importance of schoolwork and his behavior are creating some significant threats to his positive self-esteem. *The discomfort that occurs when we behave in ways that we see as inappropriate, such as when we fail to live up to our own expectations*, is called cognitive dissonance (Cooper, 2007; Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999). The discomfort of cognitive dissonance is experienced as pain, showing up in a part of the brain that is particularly sensitive to pain—the anterior cingulate cortex (van Veen, Krug, Schooler, & Carter, 2009).

Leon Festinger and J. Merrill Carlsmith (1959) conducted an important study designed to demonstrate the extent to which behaviors that are discrepant from our initial beliefs can create cognitive dissonance and can influence attitudes. College students participated in an experiment in which they were asked to work on a task that was incredibly boring and lasted for a full hour. After they had finished the task, the experimenter explained that the assistant who normally helped convince people to participate in the study was unavailable and that he could use some help persuading the next person that the task was going to be interesting and enjoyable. The experimenter explained that it would be much more convincing if a fellow student rather than the experimenter delivered this message and asked the participant if he would be willing do to it. Thus with his request the experimenter induced the participants to lie about the task to another student, and all the participants agreed to do so.

The experimental manipulation involved the amount of money the students were paid to tell the lie. Half of the students were offered a large payment ($20) for telling the lie, whereas the other half were offered only a small payment ($1) for telling the lie. After the participants had told the lie, an interviewer asked each of them how much they had enjoyed the task they had performed earlier in the experiment. As you can see in Figure 5.6, Festinger and Carlsmith found that the students who had been paid $20 for saying the tasks had been enjoyable rated the task as very boring, which indeed it was. In contrast, the students who were paid only $1 for telling the lie changed their attitude toward the task and rated it as significantly more interesting.

Festinger explained the results of this study in terms of consistency and inconsistency among cognitions. He hypothesized that some thoughts might be *dissonant*, in the sense that they made us feel uncomfortable, while other thoughts were more *consonant*, in the sense that they made us feel good. He argued that people may feel an uncomfortable state (which he called *cognitive dissonance*) when they have many dissonant thoughts—for instance, between the idea that (a) they are smart and decent people and (b) they nevertheless told a lie to another student for only a small payment.

Festinger argued that the people in his experiment who had been induced to lie for only $1 experienced more cognitive dissonance than the people who were paid $20 because the latter people had a strong external justification for having done it whereas the former did not. The people in the $1 condition, Festinger argued, needed to convince themselves that that the task was actually interesting to reduce the dissonance they were experiencing.

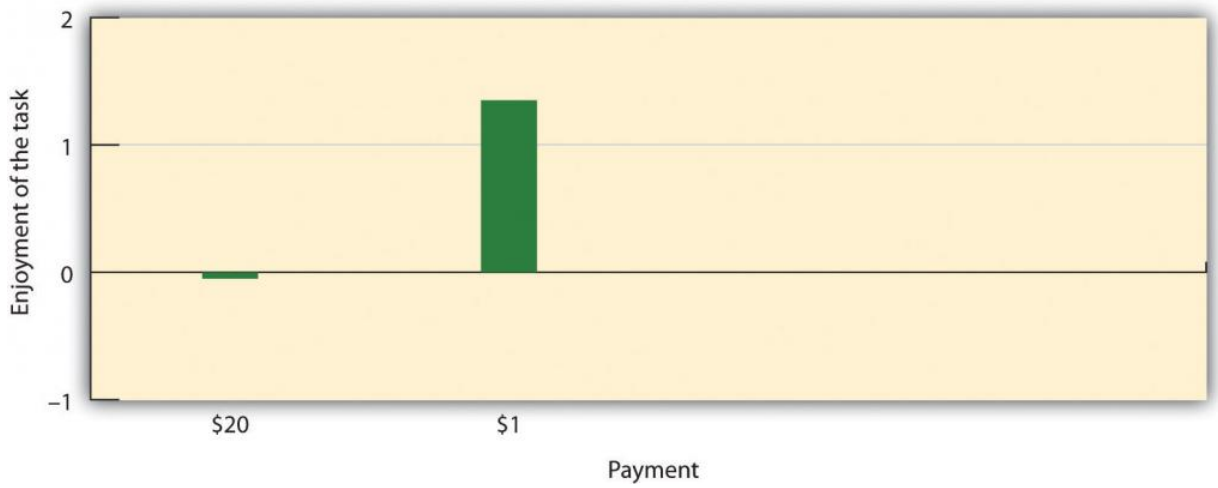


Figure 5.6 Festinger and Carlsmith

Participants who had engaged in a boring task and then told another student it was interesting experienced cognitive dissonance, leading them to rate the task more positively in comparison to those who were paid $20 to do the same. Data are from Festinger and Carlsmith (1959).

Although originally considered in terms of the inconsistency among different cognitions, Festinger's theory has also been applied to the negative feelings that we experience when there is inconsistency between our attitudes and our behavior, and particularly when the behavior threatens our perceptions of ourselves as good people (Aronson, 1969). Thus Joachim is likely feeling cognitive dissonance because he has acted against his better judgment and these behaviors are having some real consequences for him. The dissonant thoughts involve (a) his perception of himself as a hardworking student, compared to (b) his recent behaviors that do not support that idea. Our expectation is that Joachim will not enjoy these negative feelings and will attempt to get rid of them.

We Reduce Dissonance by Decreasing Dissonant or by Increasing Consonant Cognitions

Because Joachim's perception of himself as a hardworking student is now in jeopardy, he is feeling cognitive dissonance and will naturally try to reduce these negative emotions. He can do so in a number of ways. One possibility is that Joachim could simply change his behavior by starting to study more and go out less. If he is successful in doing this, his dissonance will clearly be reduced and he can again feel good about himself. But it seems that he has not been very successful in this regard—over the past weeks he has continually put off studying for listening to music. A second option is to attempt to reduce his dissonant cognitions—those that threaten his self-esteem. Perhaps he might try to convince himself that he has only failed one test and that he didn't expect to do very well in biology anyway. If he can make the negative behaviors seem less important, dissonance will be reduced.

One of Festinger's most powerful insights into social psychology was that, even if Joachim cannot change his behavior and even if he knows that what he's doing has negative consequences, he still has a third option: He can create new consonant cognitions to counteract the dissonant cognitions. For instance, Joachim might try to convince himself that he is going to become an important record producer some day and that it is therefore essential that he attend many concerts. When Joachim takes this route he changes his beliefs to be more in line with his behavior, and the outcome is that he has now restored attitude consistency. His behaviors no longer seem as discrepant from his attitudes as they were before, and when consistency is restored, dissonance is reduced. What the principles of cognitive dissonance suggest, then, is that we may frequently spend more energy convincing ourselves that we are good people than we do thinking of ourselves accurately. Of course we do this because viewing ourselves negatively is painful.

Cognitive Dissonance in Everyday Life

Cognitive dissonance is an important social psychological principle that can explain how attitudes follow behavior in many domains of our everyday life. For instance, people who try but fail to quit smoking cigarettes naturally suffer lowered self-esteem (Gibbons, Eggleston, & Benthin, 1997). But rather than accepting this negative feeling, they frequently attempt to engage in behaviors that reduce dissonance. They may try to convince themselves that smoking is not that bad: "My grandmother smoked but lived to be 93 years old!" "I'm going to quit next year!" Or they may try to add new consonant cognitions: "Smoking is fun; it relaxes me." You can see that these processes, although making us feel better about ourselves at least in the short run, may nevertheless have some long-term negative outcomes.

Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills (1959) studied whether the cognitive dissonance created by an initiation process could explain how much commitment students felt to a group they were part of. In their experiment, female college students volunteered to join a group that would be meeting regularly to discuss various aspects of the psychology of sex. According to random assignment, some of the women were told that they would be required to perform an embarrassing procedure (they were asked to read some obscene words and some sexually oriented passages from a novel in public) before they could join the group, whereas other women did not have to go through this initiation. Then all the women got a chance to listen to the group's conversation, which turned out to be very boring.

Aronson and Mills found that the women who had gone through the embarrassing experience subsequently reported more liking for the group than those who had not, and Gerard and Matthewson (1966) found that having to take some electrical shocks as part of an initiation process had the same effect. Aronson and Mills argued that the more effort an individual expends to become a member of the group (for instance, a severe initiation), the more he will become committed to the group in order to justify the effort he has put in during the initiation. The idea is that the effort creates dissonant cognitions ("I did all this work to join the group"), which are then justified by creating more consonant ones ("OK, this group is really pretty fun"). The women who spent little effort to get into the group were able to see the group as the dull and boring conversation that it was. The women who went through the more severe initiation, however, succeeded in convincing themselves that the same discussion was a worthwhile experience. When we put in effort for something—an initiation, a big purchase price, or even some of our precious time—we will likely end up liking the activity more than we would have if the effort had been less. Even the effort of having to fill out a purchase agreement for a product, rather than having the salesperson do it for you, creates commitment to the purchase and a greater likelihood of staying in the deal (Cialdini, 1988).

Another time you may have experienced the negative affective state of cognitive dissonance is after you have made an important and irrevocable decision. Imagine that you are about to buy a new car and you have narrowed your search to a small new car and a larger (but much cheaper) used car. The problem is that you can see advantages and disadvantages to each. For instance, the smaller car would get better gas mileage, but the larger car—because it is used—is cheaper. Imagine, however, that you finally decide to buy the larger car because you feel that you really don't have enough money for the new car.

That night, you're lying in bed and wondering about your decision. Although you've enjoyed driving the big car that you have just purchased, you're worried about rising gas costs, the negative impact of the big car on the environment, and the possibility that the car might need a lot of repairs. Have you made the right decision? This "buyer's remorse" can be interpreted in terms of postdecisional dissonance—*the feeling of regret that may occur after we make an important decision* (Brehm, 1956). However, the principles of dissonance predict that once you make the decision—*and regardless of which car you choose*—you will convince yourself that you made the right choice. I would predict that since you have chosen the larger car you will begin to think more about the positive aspects of the choice that you have made (what you are going to be able to do with the money you saved, rather than how much more it is going to cost to fill up the gas tank) and at the same time you will likely downplay the values of the smaller car.

Jack Brehm (1956) posed as a representative of a consumer testing service and asked women to rate the attractiveness and desirability of several kinds of appliances, such as toasters and electric coffee makers. Each woman was told that as a reward for having participated in the survey, she could have one of the appliances as a gift. She was given a choice between two of the products she had rated as being about equally attractive. After she made her decision, her appliance was wrapped up and given to her. Then, 20 minutes later, each woman was asked to rerate all the products. As you can see in Figure 5.7, Brehm found that the women rated the appliance that they had chosen and been given as a gift higher than they had the first time. And the women also lowered their rating of the appliance they might have chosen but decided to reject. These results are of course consistent with the principles of cognitive dissonance—post-decisional dissonance is reduced by focusing on the positive aspects of the chosen product and the negative aspects of the rejected product.

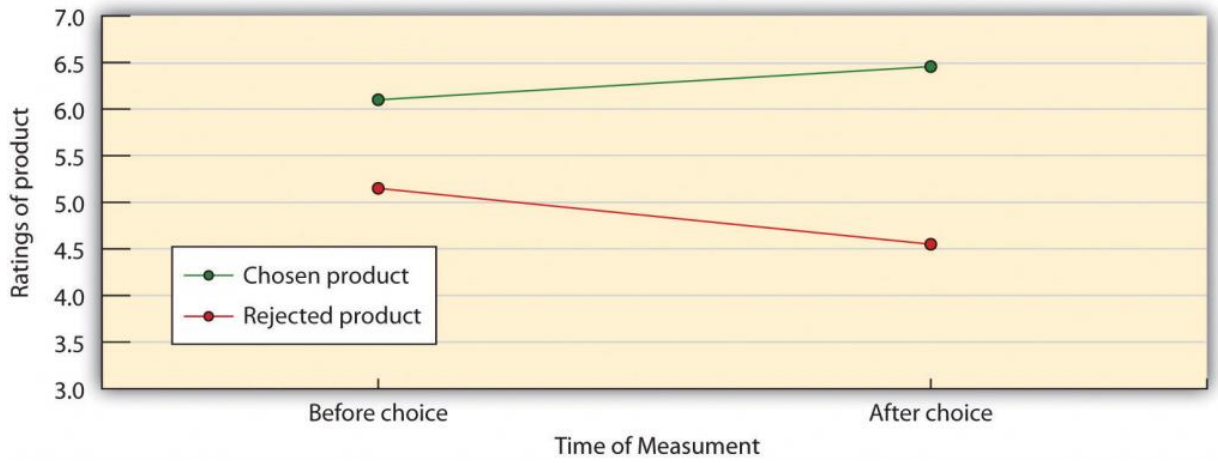


Figure 5.7 Postdecisional Dissonance

As predicted by the desire to reduce postdecisional dissonance, participants increased the perceived desirability of a product they had chosen and decreased the perceived desirability of a product they did not choose. Data are from Brehm (1956).

What research on cognitive dissonance suggests, then, is that people who are experiencing dissonance will generally try to reduce it. If we fail to lose the weight we wanted to lose, we decide that we look good anyway. If we cheat on an exam, we decide that cheating is OK. If we hurt someone else's feelings, we may even decide that they are bad people who deserve our negative behavior. To escape from feeling poorly about ourselves, people will engage in quite extraordinary rationalizing. No wonder that most of us believe that "If I had it all to do over again, I would not change anything important."

Of course, the tendency to justify our past behavior has positive outcomes for our affect. If we are able to convince ourselves that we can do no wrong, we will be happier—at least for today. But the desire to create positive self-esteem can lead to a succession of self-justifications that ultimately result in a chain of irrational actions. The irony is that to avoid thinking of ourselves as bad or immoral, we may set ourselves up for more immoral acts. Once Joachim has convinced himself that his schoolwork is not important, it may be hard to pick it up again. Once a smoker has decided it is OK to smoke, she may just keep smoking. If we spend too much time thinking positively about ourselves we will not learn from our mistakes, nor grow or change. In order to learn from our behavior, it would be helpful to learn to tolerate dissonance long enough to examine the situation critically and dispassionately. We then stand a chance of breaking out of the cycle of action followed by justification, followed by more action.

There is still another potential negative outcome of dissonance: When we have to make choices we may feel that we have made poor ones. Barry Schwartz (2004) has argued that having too many choices can create dissonance and thus the opportunity for regret. When we go to the store and have to pick only one out of 30 different types of chocolates, we have more opportunities for postdecisional dissonance. Although it seems like being allowed to choose would be a good thing, people report being happier when they are given a free gift than when they are given a choice between two similar gifts and have to reject one of them (Hsee & Hastie, 2006).

Positive Self-Esteem Reduces Dissonance

We have seen that the experience of cognitive dissonance can influence our thoughts and feelings about an attitude object by making us feel uncomfortable about our own behaviors. The discrepant behavior causes our sense of self-worth to be lowered, which then causes us to change our attitudes to feel better about ourselves.

discrepant behavior ⟶ lowered self-worth ⟶ changes in thoughts and feelings

Imagine that immediately after you did something dishonest, but before you had a chance to try to reduce the dissonance you were experiencing, you were able to remind yourself of the fact that you had recently done something else very positive—perhaps you had recently spent some time volunteering at a homeless shelter or gotten a really high score on an important exam. Would the possibility of boosting your self-esteem in this other, but unrelated, domain make it unnecessary for you to engage in dissonance reduction? Could you not say, "Well, it's true that I cheated, but I'm really a fine, intelligent, and generous person." Research has demonstrated that this is the case. If we can affirm our self-worth, even on dimensions that are not related to the source of the original dissonance, the negative feelings we experience are reduced and so is the tendency to justify our attitudes (Steele, 1988).

Just as finding ways to affirm our self-esteem should reduce cognitive dissonance, threats to our self-esteem should increase it. Because cognitive dissonance poses a threat to one's self-esteem, people who are more motivated by self-concern should show bigger changes in their thoughts and feelings after they engage in a discrepant behavior than should those who are less motivated by self-concern.

Following the research of Brehm, Steve Heine and Darren Lehman (1997) conducted an experiment to determine if threats to self-esteem would increase the magnitude of the dissonance-reduction effect, and if dissonance reduction would also occur for Japanese students as they had previously been found in students from Western samples. They expected that there would be less need for dissonance reduction in the Japanese than in Western students because the Japanese (and other Easterners) were less motivated overall to maintain a positive self-image.

In their study, 71 Canadian and 71 Japanese participants were first asked to take a personality test. According to random assignment to conditions, one third of the sample in each country were led to believe that they had scored much higher on the test than did the other participants and thus that they had "positive" personalities (the *positive feedback* condition). Another third of the sample (the *negative feedback* condition) were led to believe that they had scored more poorly on the test than average, and a final third (the *control condition*) were not given any feedback on their personality test scores.

Then all participants rated the desirability of 10 compact discs (the discs were known to be popular in both Canada and Japan) and were asked to choose between their fifth and sixth rated CDs as compensation for their participation. Finally, after choosing one of the CDs, the participants were asked to again rate their liking for the CDs. The change in the ratings from before choice to after choice, which would have occurred if the participants increased their liking of the CD they had chosen or decreased their liking of the CD they had rejected, was the dependent measure in the study.

As you can see in Figure 5.8, the researchers found a significant interaction between culture and personality feedback. The pattern of means showed that the feedback mattered for the Canadian participants—the difference in the ratings of the chosen versus the rejected CD (the "spread of alternatives") increased from the positive to the control to the negative feedback conditions. However, there was no significant simple effect of feedback for the Japanese students, nor did they show a significant spread of alternatives in any feedback condition.

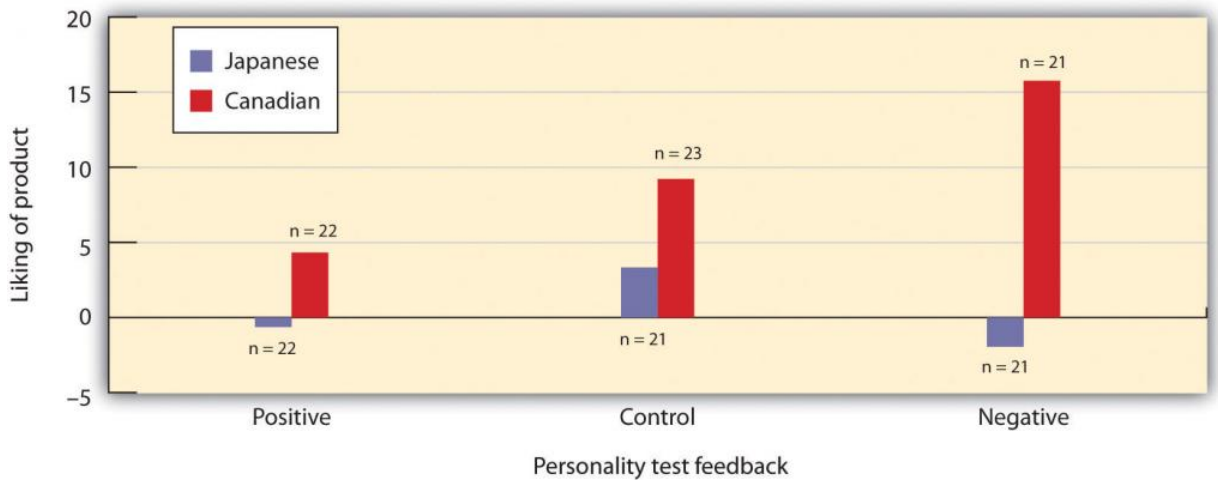


Figure 5.8 Spread of Alternatives by Culture and Feedback Condition

The Canadian participants showed a greater spread of alternatives when their self-esteem was threatened, but Japanese participants did not. Data are from Heine and Lehman (1997).

However, other researchers have found that individuals from collectivist cultures do show dissonance effects when they are focused on their relationships with others. For instance, Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, and Suzuki (2004) found that East Asian participants experienced dissonance particularly when they were asked to think about a close friend who had made a dissonance-creating decision. Such a result would be expected because behaviors that involve more other-oriented, collectivistic outcomes should be more important for these people. Indeed, research has found that advertisements that are framed in terms of personal benefits ("Use this breath mint!") are more persuasive in individualistic cultures, whereas ads that emphasize family or ingroup benefits ("Share this breath mint with your friends!") are more persuasive in collectivistic cultures (Han & Shavitt, 1994).

Although dissonance is most likely when our behavior violates our positive self-concept, attitude change can occur whenever our thoughts and behaviors are inconsistent, even if the self-concept is not involved. For instance, Harmon-Jones and his colleagues (Harmon-Jones, Brehm, Greenberg, Simon, & Nelson, 1996) had people drink an unpleasant-tasting beverage (Kool-Aid made with vinegar instead of sugar) and then write down on a small slip of paper, which they then immediately crumpled up and threw away, a statement saying that they really liked the drink. Harmon-Jones and his colleagues found that even though the lie could not possibly harm anyone, the act of lying nevertheless made the participants express more positive attitudes toward the drink. It appears that even lying to oneself about something relatively unimportant can produce dissonance and change attitudes (Prislin & Pool, 1996; Stone, 1999).

Salespeople make use of psychological principles, including self-perception and cognitive dissonance, to encourage people to buy their products, often in ways that seem less than completely open and ethical. Informed consumers are aware of such techniques, including the foot-in-the-door technique, the low-ball technique, and the bait-and-switch technique. Let's consider in the next section how these strategies might work.

How Salespeople Use Principles of Persuasion

The research that we have discussed in this chapter suggests some of the many ways that we can persuade people to buy our products, to vote for our candidates, and to engage in other behaviors that we would like them to engage in. We have seen that we will be more successful if we use the right communicators and if we present the right messages under the right conditions. But it must also be kept in mind that a full understanding of the techniques used by persuaders may also be useful to help us avoid being persuaded by others.

Salespeople sometimes make use of the Behavior ⟶ Attitude relationship to attempt to persuade others. Regardless of whether the change is due to the cognitive principles of self-perception or the more affective principles of dissonance reduction, the attitude change that follows behavior can be strong and long lasting. This fact creates some very interesting opportunities for changing attitudes.

One approach based on this idea is to get people to move slowly in the desired direction, such that they commit to a smaller act first. The idea is that it will be relatively easy to get people to engage in a small behavior after which their perceptions of this initial behavior will change their attitudes, making it more likely for them to engage in a more costly behavior later. The *foot-in-the-door technique* refers to *a persuasion attempt in which we first get the target to accept a rather minor request, and then we ask for a larger request*. Freedman and Fraser (1966) asked homeowners if they would be willing to place a small sticker in the window of their house that said "Be a safe driver." Many of the homeowners agreed to this small request. Then several weeks later, the researchers came back and asked these same homeowners to put a big, ugly "DRIVE CAREFULLY" sign on their lawns. Almost 80% of the homeowners who had agreed to put the sticker in their window later agreed to put the sign up, in comparison to only about 20% who agreed when they were asked about the sign without having been asked about the sticker first. In a more recent study, Nicolas Guéguen (2002) found that students in a computer discussion group were more likely to volunteer to complete a 40-question survey on their food habits (which required 15 to 20 minutes of their time) if they had already, a few minutes earlier, agreed to help the same requestor with a simple computer-related question (about how to convert a file type) than if they had not first been given the smaller opportunity to help.

You can see that the foot-in-the-door technique is a classic case of self-perception and commitment—once people label themselves as the kind of person who conforms to the requests of others in the relevant domain ("I volunteer to help safe driving campaigns," "I help people in my discussion group"), it is easier to get them to conform later. Similarly, imagine a restaurant owner who has problems with people who make table reservations but then don't call to cancel when they can't come at the appointed time. The restaurant owner could try to reduce the problem by first getting a small commitment. Instead of having the people who take the reservations say, "Please call if you change your plans," they could instead ask, "Will you call us if you change your plans?" and then wait for the person to say yes. The act of saying yes to a simple request creates commitment to the behavior, and not following through on the promise would be likely to create cognitive dissonance. Since people don't want to feel that they have violated their commitment, this should reduce the no-show rate.

Another approach based on the attitudes-follow-behavior idea, and which can be used by unscrupulous salespeople, is known as the *low-ball technique*. In this case the salesperson *promises the customer something desirable, such as a low price on a car, with the intention of getting the person to imagine themselves engaging in the desired behavior* (in this case, purchasing the car). After the customer has committed to purchasing the car at a low price, the salesperson then indicates that he or she cannot actually sell the car at that price. In this case people are more likely to buy the car at the higher price than they would have

been if the car had first been offered at the higher price. Backing out on a commitment seems wrong and may threaten self-esteem, even if the commitment was obtained in an unethical way.

In research testing the low-ball effect, Guéguen, Pascual, and Dagot (2002) asked people to watch a dog for them while they visited someone in the hospital. Some participants were told that they would need to watch the dog for 30 minutes. Other participants were first asked simply to commit to watching the dog, and then only later informed that they would have to watch it for 30 minutes. The latter group had been low-balled, and they complied more often with the request.

A close alternative to low-balling is known as the *bait-and-switch technique, which occurs when someone advertises a product at a very low price. When you visit to the store to buy the product, however, you learn that the product you wanted at the low price has been sold out.* An example is a car dealership that advertises a low-priced car in a newspaper ad but doesn't have that car available when you visit the dealership to purchase it. Again, people are more likely to buy an alternative higher-priced product after they have committed themselves to the purchase than they would have been without the original information. Once you imagine yourself owning the car, your attitude toward the car becomes more positive, making the idea of giving it up more costly and also making it more likely that you will buy it.

Key Takeaways

- As predicted by the principle of attitude consistency, if we engage in an unexpected or unusual behavior, our thoughts and feelings toward that behavior are likely to change.
- Self-perception occurs when we use our own behavior as a guide to help us determine our thoughts and feelings.
- Self-perception can lead to either insufficient justification—the perception that there was not enough external threat to avoid engaging in a behavior—or overjustification—the perception that our behavior was caused primarily by external factors.
- Principles of self-perception suggest that to create true attitude change we should avoid using too much punishment or too much reward.
- Cognitive dissonance refers to the discomfort that occurs when we behave in ways that we see as inappropriate, such as when we fail to live up to our own expectations
- Dissonance is reduced by changing behavior, by reducing dissonant cognitions, or by creating new consonant cognitions to counteract the dissonant cognitions.
- Dissonance is observed in many everyday experiences, including initiation and the experience of postdecisional dissonance.
- Engaging in dissonance reduction has many positive outcomes for our affect but may lead to harmful self-justifications and irrational actions.
- Because dissonance involves self-concern, it is stronger when we do not feel very positively about ourselves and may be stronger in Western than in Eastern cultures.
- Marketers use the principles of dissonance in their attempts at persuasion. Examples are the foot-in-the-door technique, low-balling, and the bait-and-switch technique.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Describe a time when your attitudes changed on the basis of your observation of your behaviors.
2. Describe a time when you behaved in a way that was inconsistent with your self-concept and which led you to experience cognitive dissonance. How did you reduce the dissonance?
3. Benjamin Franklin once asked one of his rivals in Congress to lend him a scarce and valuable book. The opponent accepted the request, and Franklin found, as he had predicted, that the opponent began to like him more after doing it. Explain this "Benjamin Franklin effect" in terms of self-perception and cognitive dissonance.
4. Did you ever buy a product or engage in an activity as the result of the foot-in-the-door technique, low-balling, or the bait-and-switch technique? If so, describe your experience.

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8.1.8: Thinking Like a Social Psychologist About Attitudes, Behavior, and Persuasion

Now that we have discussed the concept of attitudes more fully, I hope you can better understand how they fit into the bigger picture of social psychology. Attitudes are central because they provide an organizing principle that helps us understand when and how our beliefs, feelings, and behaviors work together. I hope you can now see some of the many ways that your attitudes toward people, social groups, products, and many other objects help you make sense of your environment and react quickly to it.

Hopefully this chapter has also given you more insight into the many techniques that advertisers use to persuade people, and perhaps given you ideas about how to prevent that persuasion from occurring. You may now have a better understanding of the remarkable success of the Obama presidential campaign as well as the techniques used in other advertising campaigns. Can you see how the characteristics of Obama himself (his attractiveness, trustworthiness, and speaking style) had such an impact on the voters? Can you see that his campaign message created very strong attitudes on the part of the Obama supporters, which made them likely to act on these attitudes? Perhaps you might see how the processes of self-perception and cognitive dissonance were important in making and keeping the momentum of the campaign. Perhaps, once people started to act as part of the “Obama for America” team, their perceptions of their own behavior drove their attitudes to be even more positive.

Think about some of the other ads that you have seen recently and consider the principles of persuasion that they used. Were the ads effective in matching the communicator, the message, and the message recipient?

You may also want to consider the principles of self-perception and cognitive dissonance as you analyze your own behavior. Can you remember times when your behavior influenced your attitudes? Were the attitudes changed as a result of self-perception or cognitive dissonance? Do you remember feeling the negative emotions associated with dissonance? Perhaps you realize that the rationalizations that you make to relieve your dissonance might not always have such positive outcomes in the long term.

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8.1.9: Chapter Summary

Attitudes are our positive or negative evaluations of an attitude object. Our attitudes are based on the ABCs of affect, behavior, and cognition. Some attitudes are more important than others because they are more useful to us and thus have more impact on our daily lives. The importance of an attitude, as assessed by how quickly it comes to mind, is known as attitude strength.

The affective, behavioral, and cognitive components of attitudes normally line up or match—this is the idea of attitude consistency. Because of this consistency, our attitudes (as assessed on self-report measures) normally predict our behavior.

We may be able to change attitudes by using persuasive communicators who deliver persuasive messages to message recipients. In general, persuasion will be greater when the communicator appeals to our self-interest. Thus attractive, trustworthy, and expert communicators, who present their messages confidently and fairly and who do not appear to be influenced by situational forces, are most effective.

Persuasive messages may be processed either spontaneously or thoughtfully. In some cases the spontaneous and emotional processing of messages may be effective because the positive or negative affect makes the message more salient, causing it to grab our attention. We are more willing and able to process information thoughtfully when the information allows us to meet underlying goals—for instance, when the message is personally relevant to us. We also process more thoughtfully when we have the ability and motivation to do so.

We may be able to help people develop a resistance to persuasion by reminding them that a persuasive message will be coming and having them practice how they will respond to influence attempts. These techniques are called forewarning and inoculation, respectively. Persuasion attempts may sometimes create reactance and thus be ineffective.

Self-perception occurs when individuals use their own behavior to help them determine their attitudes toward an attitude object. That is, we may use our own behavior as a guide to help us determine our own thoughts and feelings, based on the assumption that our thoughts and feelings should be consistent with our behaviors.

When the social situation actually causes a behavior but the individual does not realize that the social situation was the cause, we call the phenomenon insufficient justification. Overjustification occurs when we view our behavior as caused by the situation, leading us to discount the extent to which our behavior was actually caused by our own interest in it.

The discomfort that occurs when we behave in ways that we see as inappropriate, such as when we fail to live up to our own expectations, is called cognitive dissonance. Dissonance can be reduced by changing behavior, by convincing ourselves that the behavior was not so negative, or by creating new consonant cognitions.

Persuaders may use principles of attitude-behavior consistency to create attitude change, for instance through techniques such as the foot-in-the-door technique, the low-ball technique, and the bait-and-switch technique.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

8.2: Influencing and Conforming

8.2.1: The Many Varieties of Conformity

8.2.2: Obedience, Power, and Leadership

8.2.3: Person, Gender, and Cultural Differences in Conformity

8.2.4: Thinking Like a Social Psychologist About Conformity

8.2.5: Chapter Summary

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8.2.1: The Many Varieties of Conformity

Learning Objectives

1. Describe some of the active and passive ways that conformity occurs in our everyday lives.
2. Compare and contrast informational conformity and normative conformity.
3. Summarize the variables that create majority and minority social influence.
4. Outline the situational variables that influence the extent to which we conform.

The typical outcome of social influence is that our beliefs and behaviors become more similar to those of others around us. At times this change occurs in a spontaneous and automatic sense, without any obvious intent of one person to change the other. Perhaps you learned to like jazz or rap music because your roommate was playing a lot of it. You didn't really want to like the music, and your roommate didn't force it on you—your preferences changed in passive way. Robert Cialdini and his colleagues (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990) found that college students were more likely to throw litter on the ground when they had just seen another person throw some paper on the ground and were least likely to litter when they had just seen another person pick up and throw paper into a trash can. The researchers interpreted this as a kind of spontaneous conformity—a tendency to follow the behavior of others, often entirely out of our awareness. Even our emotional states become more similar to those we spend more time with (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003).

Research Focus

Imitation as Subtle Conformity

Perhaps you have noticed in your own behavior a type of very subtle conformity—the tendency to imitate other people who are around you. Have you ever found yourself talking, smiling, or frowning in the same way that a friend does? Tanya Chartrand and John Bargh (1999) investigated whether the tendency to imitate others would occur even for strangers, and even in very short periods of time.

In their first experiment, students worked on a task with another student, who was actually an experimental confederate. The two worked together to discuss photographs taken from current magazines. While they were working together, the confederate engaged in some unusual behaviors to see if the research participant would mimic them. Specifically, the confederate either rubbed his or her face or shook his or her foot. It turned out that the students did mimic the behavior of the confederate, by themselves either rubbing their own faces or shaking their own feet. And when the experimenters asked the participants if they had noticed anything unusual about the behavior of the other person during the experiment, none of them indicated awareness of any face rubbing or foot shaking.

It is said that imitation is a form of flattery, and we might therefore expect that we would like people who imitate us. Indeed, in a second experiment, Chartrand and Bargh found exactly this. Rather than creating the behavior to be mimicked, in this study the confederate imitated the behaviors of the participant. While the participant and the confederate discussed the magazine photos, the confederate mirrored the posture, movements, and mannerisms displayed by the participant.

As you can see in the following figure, the participants who had been mimicked liked the other person more and indicated that they thought the interaction had gone more smoothly, in comparison with the participants who had not been imitated.

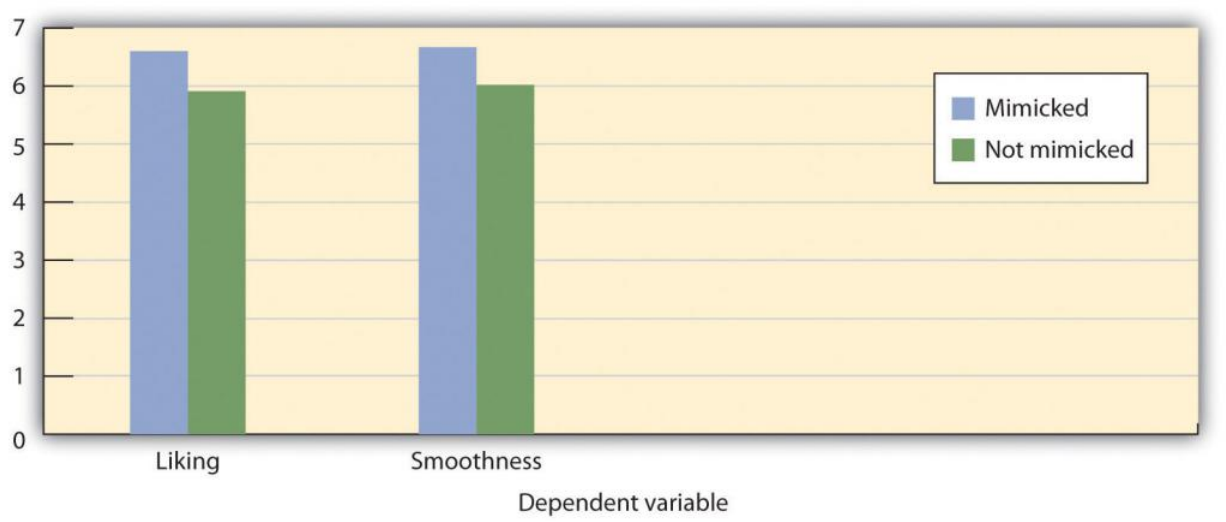


Figure 7.1

Participants who had been mimicked indicated that they liked the person who had imitated them more and that the interaction with that person had gone more smoothly, in comparison with participants who had not been mimicked. Data are from Chartrand and Bargh (1999).

Imitation is an important part of social interaction. We easily and frequently mimic others without being aware that we are doing so. We may communicate to others that we agree with their viewpoints by mimicking their behaviors, and we tend to get along better with people with whom we are well "coordinated." We even expect people to mimic us in social interactions, and we become distressed when they do not (Dalton, Chartrand, & Finkel, 2010). This unconscious conformity may help explain why we hit it off immediately with some people and never get it together with others (Chartrand & Dalton, 2009; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990, 1992).

Informational Conformity: Conforming to Be Accurate

Although mimicry represents the more subtle side, conformity also occurs in a more active and thoughtful sense, for instance, when we actively look to our friends' opinions to determine appropriate behavior, when a car salesperson attempts to make a sale, or even when a powerful dictator uses physical aggression to force the people in his country to engage in the behaviors that he desires. In these cases, the influence is obvious. We know we are being influenced and we may attempt—sometimes successfully, and sometimes less so—to counteract the pressure.

Influence sometimes occurs because we believe that other people have valid knowledge about an opinion or issue, and we use that information to help us make good decisions. When we take our winter coat to school because the weatherman says it's going to be cold, this is because we think that the weatherman has some good information that we can use. Informational conformity*is the change in opinions or behavior that occurs when we conform to people whom we believe have accurate information*. We base our beliefs on those presented to us by reporters, scientists, doctors, and lawyers because we believe they have more expertise in certain fields than we have. But we also use our friends and colleagues for information; when we choose a prom gown on the basis of our friends' advice about what looks good on us, we are using informational conformity—we believe that our friends have good judgment about the things that matter to us.

Informational conformity is often the end result of *social comparison*, the process of comparing our opinions with those of others to gain an accurate appraisal of the validity of an opinion or behavior (Festinger, Schachter, & Back, 1950; Hardin & Higgins, 1996; Turner, 1991). Informational conformity lead to real, long-lasting, changes in beliefs. The result of informational influence is normally private acceptance: *real change in opinions on the part of the individual*. We believe that taking the winter coat was the right thing to do and that the prom gown really looks good on us.

Normative Conformity: Conforming to Be Liked and to Avoid Rejection

In other cases we conform not because we want to have valid knowledge but rather to meet the goal of belonging to and being accepted by a group that we care about (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). When we start smoking cigarettes or buy shoes that we cannot

really afford in order to impress others, we do these things not so much because we think they are the right things to do but rather because we want to be liked.

Normative conformity occurs *when we express opinions or behave in ways that help us to be accepted or that keep us from being isolated or rejected by others*. When we engage in normative conformity we conform to *social norms*—socially accepted beliefs about what we do or should do in particular social contexts (Cialdini, 1993; Sherif, 1936; Sumner, 1906).

In contrast to informational conformity, in which the attitudes or opinions of the individual change to match that of the influencers, the outcome of normative conformity often represents *public conformity* rather than private acceptance. Public conformity is a *superficial change in behavior (including the public expression of opinions) that is not accompanied by an actual change in one's private opinion*. Conformity may appear in our public behavior even though we may believe something completely different in private. We may obey the speed limit or wear a uniform to our job (behavior) to conform to social norms and requirements, even though we may not necessarily believe that it is appropriate to do so (opinion). We may use drugs with our friends without really wanting to, and without believing it is really right, because our friends are all using drugs. However, behaviors that are originally performed out of a desire to be accepted (normative conformity) may frequently produce changes in beliefs to match them, and the result becomes private acceptance. Perhaps you know someone who started smoking to please his friends but soon convinced himself that it was an acceptable thing to do.

Although in some cases conformity may be purely informational or purely normative, in most cases the goals of being accurate and being accepted go hand-in-hand, and therefore informational and normative conformity often occur at the same time. When soldiers obey their commanding officers, they probably do it both because others are doing it (normative conformity) and because they think it is the right thing to do (informational conformity). It has been argued that the distinction between informational and normative conformity is more apparent than real and that it may not be possible to fully differentiate them (Turner, 1991).

Majority Influence: Conforming to the Group

Although conformity occurs whenever group members change their opinions or behaviors as a result of their perceptions of others, we can divide such influence into two types. Majority influence*occurs when the beliefs held by the larger number of individuals in the current social group prevail*. In contrast, minority influence occurs when *the beliefs held by the smaller number of individuals in the current social group prevail*. Not surprisingly, majority influence is more common, and we will consider it first.

In a series of important studies on conformity, Muzafer Sherif (1936) used a perceptual phenomenon known as the *autokinetic effect* to study the outcomes of conformity on the development of group norms. The autokinetic effect is caused by the rapid, small movements of our eyes that occur as we view objects and that allow us to focus on stimuli in our environment. However, when individuals are placed in a dark room that contains only a single, small, stationary pinpoint of light, these eye movements produce an unusual effect for the perceiver—they make the point of light appear to move.

Sherif took advantage of this effect to study how group norms develop in ambiguous situations. In his studies, college students were placed in a dark room with the point of light and were asked to indicate, each time the light was turned on, how much it appeared to move. Some participants first made their judgments alone. Sherif found that although each participant who was tested alone made estimates that were within a relatively narrow range (as if they had their own "individual" norm), there were wide variations in the size of these judgments among the different participants he studied.

Sherif also found that when individuals who initially had made very different estimates were then placed in groups along with one or two other individuals, and in which all the group members gave their responses on each trial aloud (each time in a different random order), the initial differences in judgments among the participants began to disappear, such that the group members eventually made very similar judgments. You can see that this pattern of change, which is shown in Figure 7.2, illustrates the fundamental principle of social influence—over time, people come more and more to share their beliefs with each other. Sherif's study is thus a powerful example of the development of group norms.

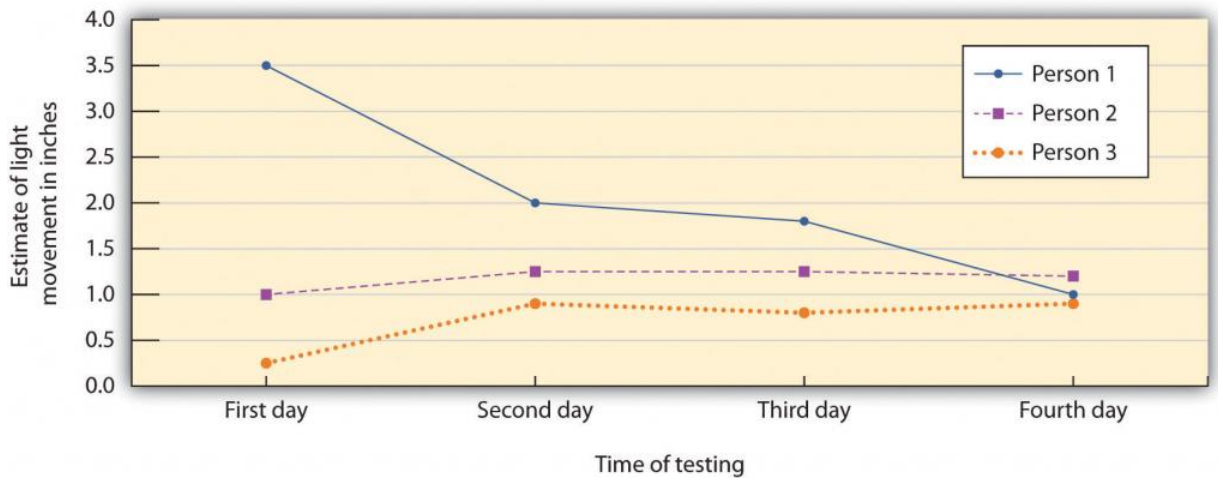


Figure 7.2 Outcomes of Sherif's Study

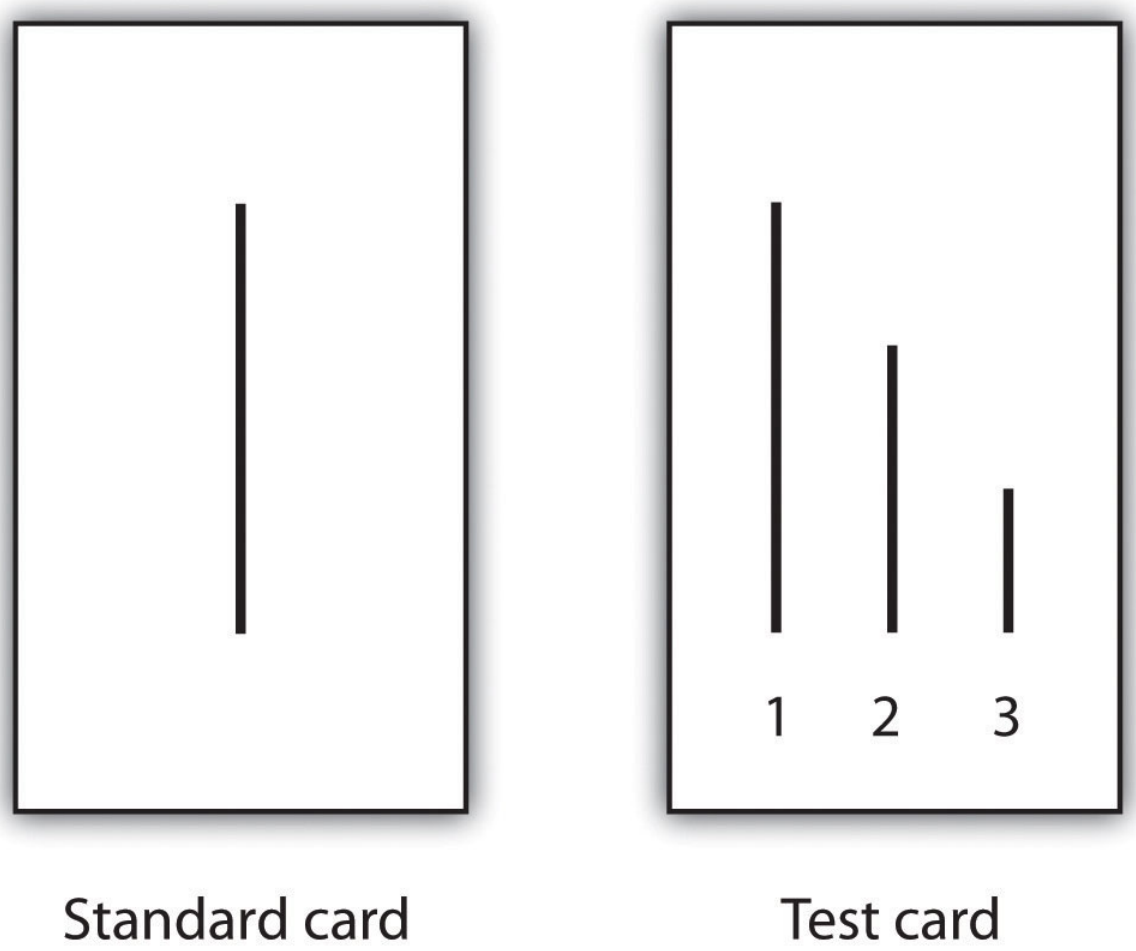
The participants in the studies by Muzafer Sherif (1936) initially had different beliefs about the degree to which a point of light appeared to be moving. (You can see these differences as expressed on Day 1.) However, as they shared their beliefs with other group members over several days, a common group norm developed. Shown here are the estimates made by a group of three participants who met together on four different days.

Furthermore, and indicating that Sherif had created private acceptance, the new group norms continued to influence judgments when the individuals were again tested alone. The participants did not revert back to their initial opinions, even though they were quite free to do so; rather, they stayed with the new group norms. And these conformity effects appear to have occurred entirely out of the awareness of most participants. Sherif (1936, p. 108) reported that the majority of the participants indicated after the experiment was over that their judgments had not been influenced by the judgments made by the other group members.

Sherif also found that the norms that were developed in groups could continue over time. When the original research participants were moved into groups with new people, their opinions subsequently influenced the judgments of the new group members (Jacobs & Campbell, 1961). The norms persisted through several "generations" (MacNeil & Sherif, 1976) and could influence individual judgments up to a year after the individual was last tested (Rohrer, Baron, Hoffman, & Swander, 1954).

When Solomon Asch (Asch, 1952, 1955) heard about Sherif's studies, he responded in perhaps the same way that you might have: "Well of course people conformed in this situation, because after all the right answer was very unclear," you might have thought. Since the study participants didn't know the right answer (or indeed the "right" answer was no movement at all), it is perhaps not that surprising that people conformed to the beliefs of others.

Asch conducted studies in which, in complete contrast to the autokinetic effect experiments of Sherif, the correct answers to the judgments were entirely unambiguous. In these studies, the research participants were male college students who were told that they were to be participating in a test of visual abilities. The men were seated in a small semicircle in front of a board that displayed the visual stimuli that they were going to judge. The men were told that there would be 18 trials during the experiment, and on each trial they would see two cards. The standard card had a single line that was to be judged. And the test card had three lines that varied in length between about 2 and 10 inches:



The men's task was simply to indicate which line on the test card was the same length as the line on the standard card. As you can see from the Asch card sample above, there is no question that correct answer is line 1. In fact, Asch found that people made virtually no errors on the task when they made their judgments alone.

On each trial, the each person answered out loud, beginning with one end of the semicircle and moving to the other end. Although the participant did not know it, the other group members were not true participants but experimental confederates who gave predetermined answers on each trial. Because the participant was seated next to last in the row, he always made his judgment after most of the other group members made theirs. Although on the first two trials the confederates each gave the correct answer, on the third trial, and on 11 of the subsequent trials, they all had been instructed to give the same incorrect answer. For instance, even though the correct answer was Line 1, they would all say it was Line 2. Thus when it became the participant's turn to answer, he could either give the clearly correct answer or conform to the incorrect responses of the confederates.

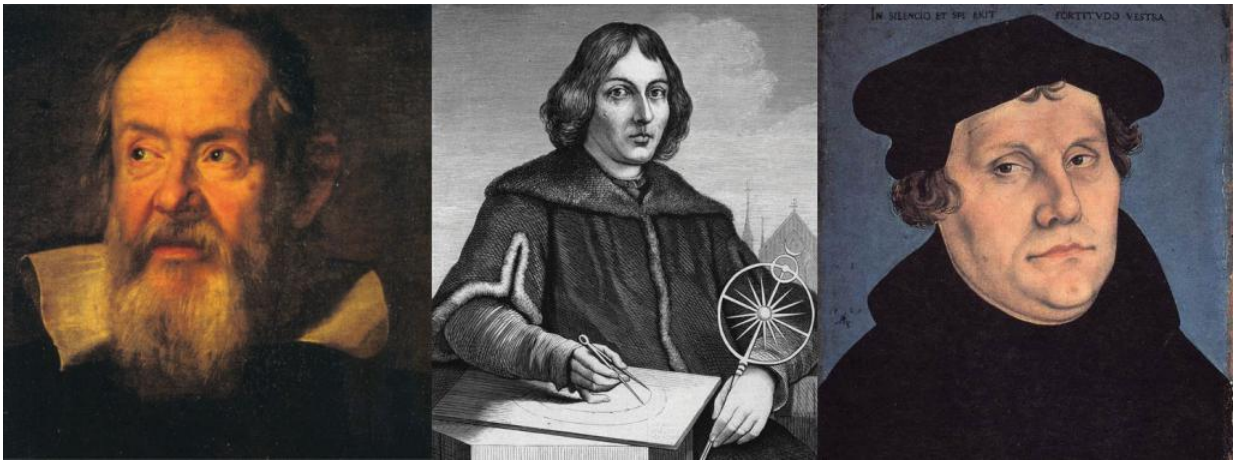
Asch found that about 76% of the 123 men who were tested gave at least one incorrect response when it was their turn, and 37% of the responses, overall, were conforming. This is indeed evidence for the power of conformity because the research participants were giving clearly incorrect answers out loud. However, conformity was not absolute—in addition to the 24% of the men who never conformed, only 5% of the men conformed on all 12 of the critical trials.

You might think that Asch's study shows primarily normative conformity, in the sense that the participants gave the wrong answer not because they thought it was correct but because they wanted to avoid being seen as different. But is it not possible that the participants were also a bit unsure of the correct answer? When I look at the picture of one of the participants in Asch's studies (see Figure 7.3), it looks to me like he is really unsure about what he is seeing. Perhaps, then, even in Asch's study some informational influence is occurring. Maybe the participants became unsure of their responses and used the opinions of others to help them determine what was correct. Normative and informational conformity often operate together.

Minority Influence: Resisting Group Pressure

The research that we have discussed to this point involves conformity in which the opinions and behaviors of individuals become more similar to the opinions and behaviors of the majority of the people in the group—majority influence. But we do not always blindly conform to the beliefs of the majority. Although more unusual, there are nevertheless cases in which a smaller number of individuals are able to influence the opinions or behaviors of the group—this is *minority influence*.

It is a good thing that minorities can be influential; otherwise, the world would be pretty boring. When we look back on history we find that it is the unusual, divergent, innovative minority groups or individuals, who—although frequently ridiculed at the time for their unusual ideas—end up being respected for producing positive changes. The work of scientists, religious leaders, philosophers, writers, musicians, and artists who go against group norms by expressing new and unusual ideas frequently is not liked at first. These novel thinkers may be punished—in some cases even killed—for their beliefs. In the end, however, if the ideas are interesting and important, the majority may conform to these new ideas, producing social change. In short, although conformity to majority opinions is essential to provide a smoothly working society, if individuals only conformed to others there would be few new ideas and little social change.



Galileo, Copernicus, and Martin Luther were people who did not conform to the opinions and behaviors of those around them. In the end their innovative ideas changed the thinking of the masses. Source: Images courtesy of Wikimedia, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Galileo-sustermans.jpg, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Copernicus.jpg, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Martin_Luther_by_Lucas_Cranach_der_%C3%84ltere.jpeg.

The French social psychologist Serge Moscovici was particularly interested in the situations under which minority influence might occur. In fact, he argued that all members of all groups are able, at least in some degree, to influence others, regardless of whether they are in the majority or the minority. To test whether minority group members could indeed produce influence, he and his colleagues (Moscovici, Lage, & Naffrechoux, 1969) created the opposite of Asch's line perception study, such that there was now a minority of confederates in the group (two) and a majority of experimental participants (four). All six individuals viewed a series of slides depicting colors, supposedly as a study of color perception, and as in Asch's research, each voiced out loud an opinion about the color of the slide.

Although the color of the slides varied in brightness, they were all clearly blue. Moreover, demonstrating that the slides were unambiguous, just as the line judgments of Asch had been, participants who were asked to make their judgments alone called the slides a different color than blue less than 1% of the time. (When it happened, they called the slides green.)

In the experiment, the two confederates had been instructed to give one of two patterns of answers that were different from the normal responses. In the *consistent-minority* condition, the two confederates gave the unusual response (green) on every trial. In the *inconsistent-minority* condition the confederates called the slides "green" on two thirds of their responses and called them blue on the other third.

The minority of two was able to change the beliefs of the majority of four, but only when they were unanimous in their judgments. As shown in Figure 7.4, Moscovici found that the presence of a minority who gave consistently unusual responses influenced the judgments made by the experimental participants. When the minority was consistent, 32% of the majority group participants said green at least once and 18% of the responses of the majority group were green. However, as you can see in Figure 7.4, the inconsistent minority had virtually no influence on the judgments of the majority.

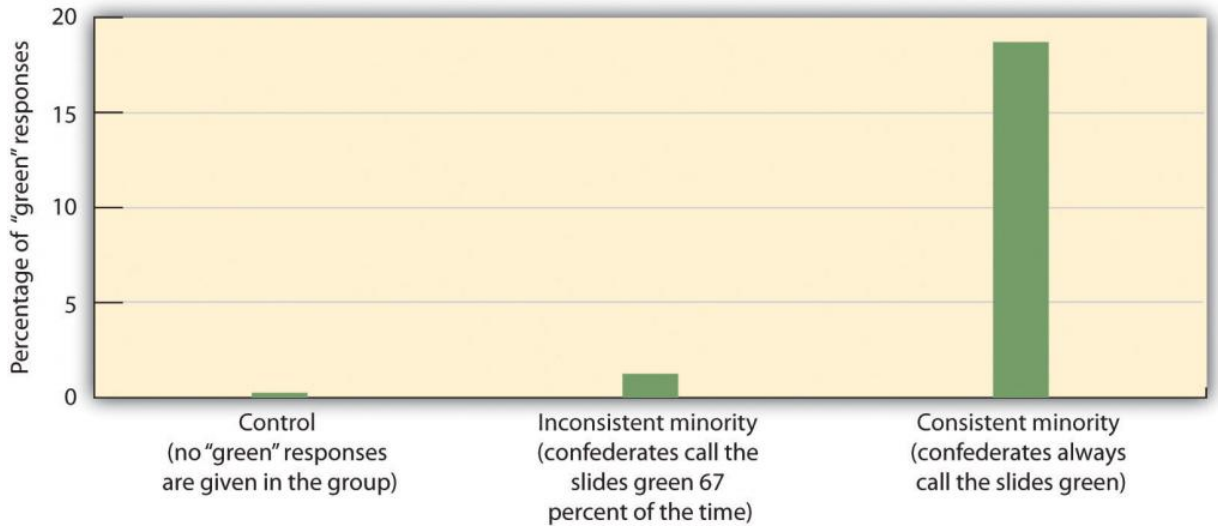


Figure 7.4 The Power of Consistent Minorities

In the studies of minority influence by Serge Moscovici, only a consistent minority (in which each individual gave the same incorrect response) was able to produce conformity in the majority participants. Data are from Moscovici, Lage, and Naffrechoux (1969).

On the basis of this research, Moscovici argued that minorities could have influence over majorities, provided they gave consistent, unanimous responses. Subsequent research has found that minorities are most effective when they express consistent opinions over time and with each other, when they show that they are invested in their position by making significant personal and material sacrifices, and when they seem to be acting out of principle rather than from ulterior motives (Hogg, 2010). Although they may want to adopt a relatively open-minded and reasonable negotiating style on issues that are less critical to the attitudes they are trying to change, successful minorities must be absolutely consistent with regard to their core arguments (Mugny & Papastamou, 1981).

When minorities are successful at producing influence, they are able to produce strong and lasting attitude change—true private acceptance—rather than simply public conformity. People conform to minorities because they think that they are right, and not because they think it is socially acceptable. Minorities have another, potentially even more important, outcome on the opinions of majority group members—the presence of minority groups can lead majorities to engage in fuller, as well as more divergent, innovative and creative thinking about the topics being discussed (Martin & Hewstone, 2003; Martin, Martin, Smith, & Hewstone, 2007).

Nemeth and Kwan (1987) had participants work in groups of four on a creativity task in which they were presented with letter strings such as *tdogto* and asked to indicate which word came to their mind first as they looked at the letters. The judgments were made privately, which allowed the experimenters to provide false feedback about the responses of the other group members. All participants indicated the most obvious word (in this case, *dog*) as their response on each of the initial trials. However, the participants were told (according to experimental condition) either that three of the other group members had also reported seeing *dog* and that one had reported seeing *god* or that three out of the four had reported seeing *god* whereas only one had reported *dog*. Participants then completed other similar word strings on their own, and their responses were studied.

Results showed that when the participants thought that the unusual response (for instance, *god* rather than *dog*) was given by a minority of one individual in the group rather than by a majority of three individuals, they subsequently answered more of the new word strings using novel solutions, such as finding words made backward or using a random order of the letters. On the other hand, the individuals who thought that the majority of the group had given the novel response did not develop more creative ideas. The idea is when the participants thought that the novel response came from a group minority (one person), they thought about the responses more carefully, in comparison with the same behaviors performed by majority group members, and this led them to adopt new and creative ways to think about the problems. This result, along with other research showing similar findings, suggests that messages that come from minority groups lead us to think more fully about the decision, which can produce innovative, creative thinking in majority group members (Crano & Chen, 1998).

In summary, we can conclude that minority influence, although not as likely as majority influence, does sometimes occur. The few are able to influence the many when they are consistent and confident in their judgments but are less able to have influence when they are inconsistent or act in a less confident manner. Furthermore, although minority influence is difficult to achieve, if it does occur it is powerful. When majorities are influenced by minorities they really change their beliefs—the outcome is deeper thinking about the message, private acceptance of the message, and in some cases even more creative thinking.

Situational Determinants of Conformity

The studies of Asch, Sherif, and Moscovici demonstrate the extent to which individuals—both majorities and minorities—can create conformity in others. Furthermore, these studies provide information about the characteristics of the social situation that are important in determining the extent to which we conform to others. Let's consider some of those variables.

The Size of the Majority

As the number of people in the majority increases, relative to the number of persons in the minority, pressure on the minority to conform also increases (Latané, 1981; Mullen, 1983). Asch conducted replications of his original line-judging study in which he varied the number of confederates (the majority subgroup members) who gave initial incorrect responses from 1 to 16 people, while holding the number in the minority subgroup constant at 1 (the single research participant). You may not be surprised to hear the results of this research: When the size of the majorities got bigger, the lone participant was more likely to give the incorrect answer.

Increases in the size of the majority increase conformity, regardless of whether the conformity is informational or normative. In terms of informational conformity, if more people express an opinion, their opinions seem more valid. Thus bigger majorities should result in more informational conformity. But larger majorities will also produce more normative conformity because being different will be harder when the majority is bigger. As the majority gets bigger, the individual giving the different opinion becomes more aware of being different, and this produces a greater need to conform to the prevailing norm.

Although increasing the size of the majority does increase conformity, this is only true up to a point. *The increase in the amount of conformity that is produced by adding new members to the majority group* (known as the social impact of each group member) is greater for initial majority members than it is for later members (Latané, 1981). This pattern is shown in Figure 7.5, which presents data from a well-known experiment by Stanley Milgram and his colleagues (Milgram, Bickman, & Berkowitz, 1969) that studied how people are influenced by the behavior of others on the streets of New York City.

Milgram had confederates gather in groups on 42nd street in New York City, in front of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, each looking up at a window on the sixth floor of the building. The confederates were formed into groups ranging from one to 15 people. A video camera in a room on the sixth floor above recorded the behavior of 1,424 pedestrians who passed along the sidewalk next to the groups.

As you can see in Figure 7.5, larger groups of confederates increased the number of people who also stopped and looked up, but the influence of each additional confederate was generally weaker as size increased. Groups of three confederates produced more conformity than did a single person, and groups of five produced more conformity than groups of three. But after the group reached about six people, it didn't really matter very much. Just as turning on the first light in an initially dark room makes more difference in the brightness of the room than turning on the second, third, and fourth lights does, adding more people to the majority tends to produce diminishing returns—less effect on conformity.

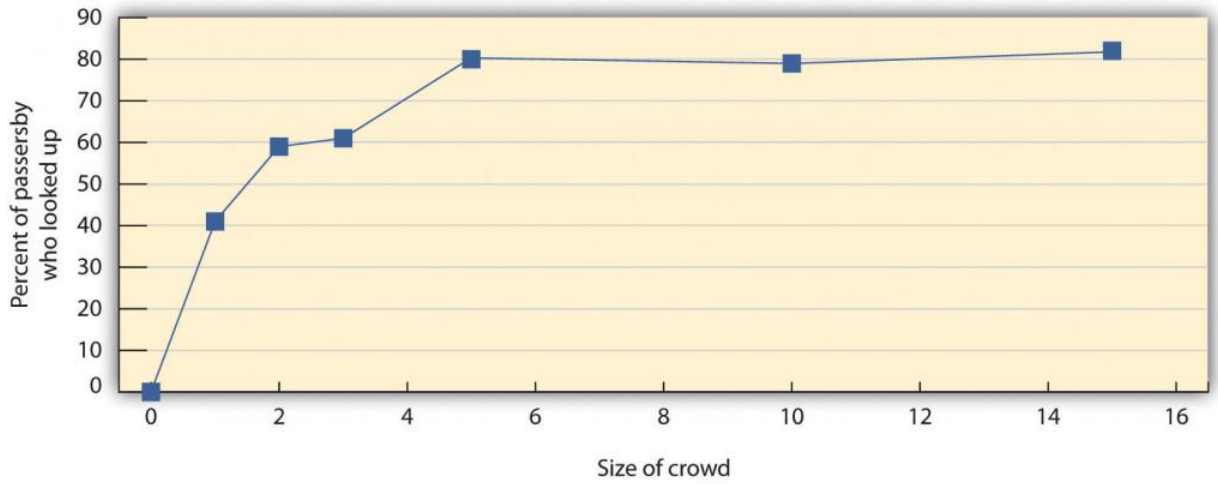


Figure 7.5 Social Impact

This figure shows the percentage of participants who looked up as a function of the size of the crowd on the street in Milgram's (1969) study on the streets of New York. You can see that the amount of conformity increases dramatically until there are five participants, after which it levels off. Similar patterns have been found in many other studies of conformity.

Group size is an important variable that influences a wide variety of behaviors of the individuals in groups. People leave proportionally smaller tips in restaurants as the number in their party increases, and people are less likely to help as the number of bystanders to an incident increases (Latané, 1981). The number of group members also has an important influence on group performance: As the size of a working group gets larger, the contributions of each individual member to the group effort become smaller. In each case, the influence of group size on behavior is found to be similar to that shown in Figure 7.5.

As you can see in Figure 7.5, the effect of adding new individuals to the group eventually levels off entirely, such that adding more people to the majority after that point makes no meaningful difference in the amount of conformity. This peak usually occurs when the majority has about four or five persons. One reason that the impact of new group members decreases so rapidly is because as the number in the group increases, the individuals in the majority are soon seen more as a group rather than as separate individuals. When there are only a couple of individuals expressing opinions, each person is likely to be seen as an individual, holding his or her own unique opinions, and each new individual adds to the impact. As a result, two people are more influential than one, and three more influential than two. However, as the number of individuals grows, and particularly when those individuals are perceived as being able to communicate with each other, the individuals are more likely to be seen as a group rather than as individuals. At this point, adding new members does not change the perception; regardless of whether there are four, five, six, or more members, the group is still just a group. As a result, the expressed opinions or behaviors of the group members no longer seem to reflect their own characteristics, so much as they do that of the group as a whole, and thus increasing the number of group members is less effective in increasing influence (Wilder, 1977).

The Unanimity of the Majority

Although the number of people in the group is an important determinant of conformity, it cannot be the only thing—if it were, minority influence would be impossible. It turns out that the *consistency* or *unanimity* of the group members is even more important. In Asch's study, as an example, conformity occurred not so much because many confederates gave a wrong answer but rather because each of the confederates gave the same wrong answer. In one follow-up study that he conducted, Asch increased the number of confederates to 16 but had just one of those confederates give the correct answer. He found that in this case, even though there were 15 incorrect and only one correct answer given by the confederates, conformity was nevertheless sharply reduced—to only about 5% of the participants' responses. And you will recall that in the minority influence research of Moscovici, the same thing occurred; conformity was only observed when the minority group members were completely consistent in their expressed opinions.

Although you might not be surprised to hear that conformity decreases when one of the group members gives the right answer, you may be more surprised to hear that conformity is reduced even when the dissenting confederate gives a different *wrong* answer. For example, conformity is reduced dramatically in Asch's line-judging situation, such that virtually all participants give the correct answer (assume it is line 3 in this case) even when the majority of the confederates have indicated that line 2 is the correct answer

and a single confederate indicates that line 1 is correct. In short, conformity is reduced when there is any inconsistency among the members of the majority group—even when one member of the majority gives an answer that is even more incorrect than that given by the other majority group members (Allen & Levine, 1968).

Why should unanimity be such an important determinant of conformity? For one, when there is complete agreement among the majority members, the individual who is the target of influence stands completely alone and must be the first to break ranks by giving a different opinion. Being the only person who is different is potentially embarrassing, and people who wish to make a good impression on, or be liked by, others may naturally want to avoid this. If you can convince your friend to wear blue jeans rather than a coat and tie to a wedding, then you're naturally going to feel a lot less conspicuous when you wear jeans too.

Second, when there is complete agreement—remember the consistent minority in the studies by Moscovici—the participant may become less sure of his or her own perceptions. Because everyone else is holding the exact same opinion, it seems that they must be correctly responding to the external reality. When such doubt occurs, the individual may be likely to conform due to informational conformity. Finally, when one or more of the other group members gives a different answer than the rest of the group (so that the unanimity of the majority group is broken), that person is no longer part of the group that is doing the influencing and becomes (along with the participant) part of the group being influenced. You can see that another way of describing the effect of unanimity is to say that as soon as the individual has someone who agrees with him or her that the others may not be correct (a supporter or ally), then the pressure to conform is reduced. Having one or more supporters who challenge the status quo validates one's own opinion and makes disagreeing with the majority more likely (Allen, 1975; Boyanowsky & Allen, 1973).

The Importance of the Task

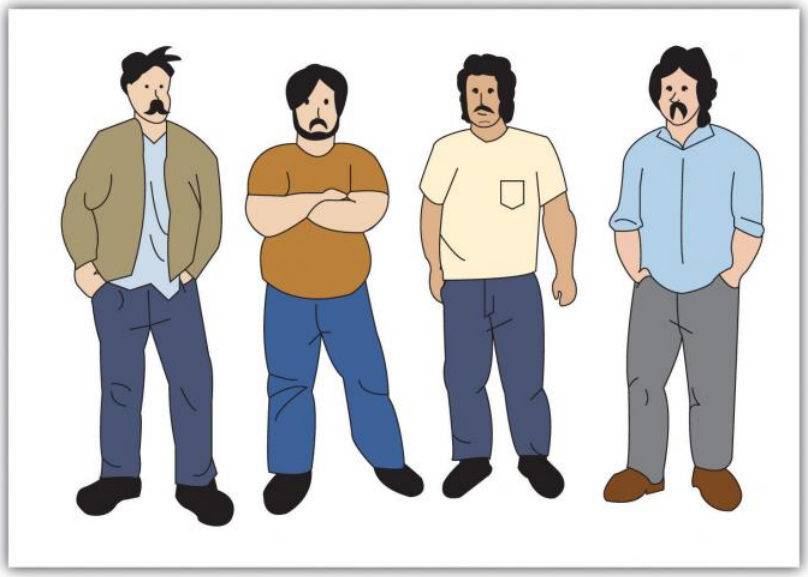
Still another determinant of conformity is the perceived importance of the decision. The studies of Sherif, Asch, and Moscovici may be criticized because the decisions that the participants made—for instance, judging the length of lines or the colors of objects—seem rather trivial. But what would happen when people were asked to make an important decision? Although you might think that conformity would be less when the task becomes more important (perhaps because people would feel uncomfortable relying on the judgments of others and want to take more responsibility for their own decisions), the influence of task importance actually turns out to be more complicated than that.

Research Focus

How Task Importance and Confidence Influence Conformity

The joint influence of an individual's confidence in his or her beliefs and the importance of the task was demonstrated in an experiment conducted by Baron, Vandello, and Brunsman (1996) that used a slight modification of the Asch procedure to assess conformity. Participants completed the experiment along with two other students, who were actually experimental confederates. The participants worked on several different types of trials, but there were 26 that were relevant to the conformity predictions. On these trials a photo of a single individual was presented first, followed immediately by a "lineup" photo of four individuals, one of whom had been viewed in the initial slide (but who might have been dressed differently):





The participants' task was to call out which person in the lineup was the same as the original individual using a number between 1 (the person on the left) and 4 (the person on the right). In each of the critical trials the two confederates went before the participant and they each gave the same wrong response.

Two experimental manipulations were used. First, the researchers manipulated task importance by telling some participants (the *high importance condition*) that their performance on the task was an important measure of eyewitness ability and that the participants who performed most accurately would receive $20 at the end of the data collection. (A lottery using all the participants was actually held at the end of the semester, and some participants were paid the $20.) Participants in the *low-importance condition*, on the other hand, were told that the test procedure was part of a pilot study and that the decisions were not that important. Second, task difficulty was varied by showing the test and the lineup photos for 5 and 10 seconds, respectively (*easy condition*) or for only ½ and 1 second, respectively (*difficult condition*). The conformity score was defined as the number of trials in which the participant offered the same (incorrect) response as the confederates.

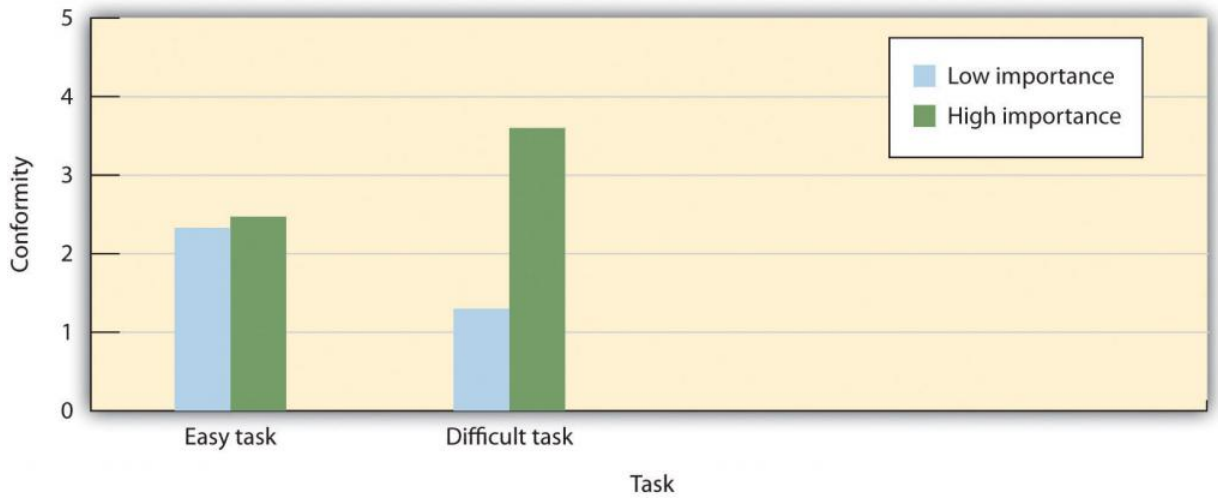


Figure 7.6

On easy tasks, participants conformed less when they thought that the decision was of high (versus low) importance, whereas on difficult tasks, participants conformed more when they thought the decision was of high importance. Data are from Baron et al. (1996).

As you can see in the preceding figure, an interaction between task difficulty and task importance was observed. On easy tasks, participants conformed less to the incorrect judgments of others when the decision had more important consequences for them. In these cases, they seemed to rely more on their own opinions (which they were convinced were correct) when it really mattered, but were more likely to go along with the opinions of the others when things were not that critical (probably normative conformity).

On the difficult tasks, however, results were the opposite. In this case participants conformed more when they thought the decision was of high, rather than low, importance. In these cases in which they were more unsure of their opinions and yet they really wanted to be correct, they used the judgments of others to inform their own views (informational conformity).

Key Takeaways

- Social influence creates conformity.
- Influence may occur in more passive or more active ways.
- We conform both to gain accurate knowledge (informational conformity) and to avoid being rejected by others (normative conformity).
- Both majorities and minorities may create social influence, but they do so in different ways.
- The characteristics of the social situation, including the number of people in the majority and the unanimity of the majority, have a strong influence on conformity.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Describe a time when you conformed to the opinions or behaviors of others. Interpret the conformity in terms of the concepts discussed in this section.
2. Imagine you were serving on a jury trial in which you found yourself the only person who believed that the defendant was innocent. What strategies might you use to convince the majority?

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8.2.2: Obedience, Power, and Leadership

Learning Objectives

1. Describe and interpret the results of Stanley Milgram's research on obedience.
2. Compare the different types of power proposed by John French and Bertram Raven and explain how they produce conformity.
3. Define leadership and explain how effective leaders are determined by the person, the situation, and the person-situation interaction.

One of the fundamental aspects of social interaction is that some individuals have more influence than others. Social power can be defined as *the ability of a person to create conformity even when the people being influenced may attempt to resist those changes* (Fiske, 1993; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Bosses have power over their workers, parents have power over their children, and, more generally, we can say that those in authority have power over their subordinates. In short, power refers to the process of social influence itself—those who have power are those who are most able to influence others.

Milgram's Studies on Obedience to Authority

The powerful ability of those in authority to control others was demonstrated in a remarkable set of studies performed by Stanley Milgram (1974). Milgram was interested in understanding the factors that lead people to obey the orders given by people in authority. He designed a study in which he could observe the extent to which a person who presented himself as an authority would be able to produce obedience, even to the extent of leading people to cause harm to others.

Video Clip 1

Milgram's Obedience to Authority Experiment

(click to see video)

Like many other social psychologists, Milgram's interest in conformity stemmed in part from his desire to understand how the presence of a powerful person—particularly the German dictator Adolph Hitler who ordered the killing of millions of people during World War II—could produce obedience. Under Hitler's direction the German SS troops oversaw the execution of 6 million Jews as well as other "undesirables," including political and religious dissidents, homosexuals, the mentally and physically disabled, and prisoners of war.

Milgram used newspaper ads to recruit men (and in one study, women) from a wide variety of backgrounds to participate in his research. When the research participant arrived at the lab, he or she was introduced to a man whom the participant believed was another research participant but who was actually an experimental confederate. The experimenter explained that the goal of the research was to study the effects of punishment on learning. After the participant and the confederate both consented to be in the study, the researcher explained that one of them would be the teacher and the other the learner. They were each given a slip of paper and asked to open it and to indicate what it said. In fact both papers read *teacher*, which allowed the confederate to pretend that he had been assigned to be the learner and thus to assure that the actual participant was always the teacher.

While the research participant (now the teacher) looked on, the learner was taken into the adjoining shock room and strapped to an electrode that was to deliver the punishment. The experimenter explained that the teacher's job would be to sit in the control room and to read a list of word pairs to the learner. After the teacher read the list once, it would be the learner's job to remember which words went together. For instance, if the word pair was *blue-sofa*, the teacher would say the word *blue* on the testing trials and the learner would have to indicate which of four possible words (*house*, *sofa*, *cat*, or *carpet*) was the correct answer by pressing one of four buttons in front of him.

After the experimenter gave the "teacher" a sample shock (which was said to be at 45 volts) to demonstrate that the shocks really were painful, the experiment began. The research participant first read the list of words to the learner and then began testing him on his learning. The shock panel, as shown in Figure 7.7, was presented in front of the teacher, and the learner was not visible in the shock room. The experimenter sat behind the teacher and explained to him that each time the learner made a mistake the teacher was to press one of the shock switches to administer the shock. Moreover, which switch was to be pressed increased by one level with each mistake, such that each mistake required a stronger shock.

Once the learner (who was, of course, actually an experimental confederate) was alone in the shock room, he unstrapped himself from the shock machine and brought out a tape recorder that he used to play a prerecorded series of responses that the teacher could hear through the wall of the room.

As you can see in Table 7.1, the teacher heard the learner say “ugh!” after the first few shocks. After the next few mistakes, when the shock level reached 150 volts, the learner was heard to exclaim “Let me out of here. I have a heart trouble!” As the shock reached about 270 volts the learner’s protests became more vehement, and after 300 volts the learner proclaimed that he was not going to answer any more questions. From 330 volts and up the learner was silent. The experimenter responded to participants’ questions at this point, if they asked any, with a scripted response indicating that they should continue reading the questions and applying increasing shock when the learner did not respond.

Table 7.1 The Confederate’s Schedule of Protest in the Milgram Experiments

75 volts	Ugh!
90 volts	Ugh!
105 voles	Ugh! (*louder*)
120 volts	Ugh! Hey, *this* really hurts.
135 volts	Ugh!!
150 volts	Uh!! Experimenter! That’s all. Get me out of here. I told you I had heart trouble. My heart’s starting to bother me now. Get me out of here, please. My heart’s starting to bother me. I refuse to go on. Let me out!
165 volts	Ugh! Let me out! (*shouting*)
180 volts	Ugh! I can’t stand the pain. Let me out of here! (*shouting*)
195 volts	Ugh! Let me out of here! Let me out of here! My heart’s bothering me. Let me out of here! You have no right to keep me here! Let me out! Let me out of here! Let me out! Let me out of here! My heart’s bothering me. Let me out! Let me out!
210 volts	Ugh!! Experimenter! *Get* me out of here. I’ve had enough. I *won’t* be in the experiment any more.
225 volts	Ugh!
240 volts	Ugh!
255 volts	Ugh! Get me *out* of here.
270 volts	(*agonized scream*) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out of here. Let me out. Do you hear? Let me out of here.
285 volts	(*agonized scream*)
300 volts	(*agonized scream*) I absolutely refuse to answer any more. Get me out of here. You can’t hold me here. Get me out. Get me out of here.
315 volts	(*intensely agonized scream*) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. My heart’s bothering me. Let me out, I tell you. (*hysterically*) Let me out of here. Let me out of here. You have no right to hold me here. Let me out! Let me out! Let me out! Let me out of here! Let me out! Let me out!

The results of Milgram’s research were themselves quite shocking. Although all of the participants gave the initial mild levels of shock, responses varied after that. Some refused to continue after about 150 volts, despite the insistence of the experimenter to

continue to increase the shock level. Still others, however, continued to present the questions, and to administer the shocks, under the pressure of the experimenter, who demanded that they continue. In the end, 65% of the participants continued giving the shock to the learner all the way up to the 450 volts maximum, even though that shock was marked as "danger: severe shock" and there had been no response heard from the participant for several trials. In sum, well over half of the men who participated had, as far as they knew, shocked another person to death, all as part of a supposed experiment on learning.

In case you are thinking that such high levels of obedience would not be observed in today's modern culture, there is fact evidence that they would be. Studies similar to Milgram's findings have been conducted all over the world (Blass, 1999) and have found similar levels of conformity, with obedience rates ranging from a high of 90% in Spain and the Netherlands (Meeus & Raaijmakers, 1986) to a low of 16% among Australian women (Kilham & Mann, 1974).

Recently, Milgram's results were almost exactly replicated, using men and women from a wide variety of ethnic groups, in a study conducted by Jerry Burger at Santa Clara University. In this replication of the Milgram experiment, 65% of the men and 73% of the women agreed to administer increasingly painful electric shocks when they were ordered to by an authority figure (Borge, 2010). In the replication, however, the participants were not allowed to go beyond the 150 volt shock switch.

Although it might be tempting to conclude that Milgram's experiments demonstrate that people are innately evil creatures who are ready to shock others to death, Milgram did not believe that this was the case. Rather, he felt that it was the social situation, and not the people themselves, that was responsible for the behavior. To demonstrate this, Milgram conducted research that explored a number of variations on his original procedure, each of which demonstrated that changes in the situation could dramatically influence the amount of conformity. These variations are summarized in Figure 7.8.

Experimental Replication	Description	Percent Obedience
Experiment 1:	Initial study: Yale University men and women	65
Experiment 10:	The study is conducted off campus, in Bridgeport, CT	48
Experiment 3:	The teacher is in the same room as the learner	40
Experiment 4:	The participant must hold the learner's hand on the shock pad	20
Experiment 7:	The experimenter communicates by phone from another room	20
Experiment 13:	An "ordinary man" (presumably another research participant) gives orders	20
Experiment 17:	Two other research participants refuse to give shock	10
Experiment 11:	The teacher chooses his own preferred shock level	0
Experiment 15:	One experimenter indicates that the participant should not shock	0

Figure 7.8 Authority and Obedience in Stanley Milgram's Studies

This figure presents the percentage of participants in Stanley Milgram's (1974) studies on obedience who were maximally obedient (that is, who gave all 450 volts of shock) in some of the variations that he conducted.

In the initial study the authority's status and power was maximized—the experimenter had been introduced as a respected scientist at a respected university. However, in replications of the study in which the experimenter's authority was decreased, obedience also declined. In one replication the status of the experimenter was reduced by having the experiment take place in a building located in Bridgeport, Connecticut, rather than at the labs on the Yale University campus, and the research was ostensibly sponsored by a private commercial research firm instead of by the university. In this study less obedience was observed (only 48% of the participants delivered the maximum shock). Full obedience was also reduced (to 20%) when the experimenter's ability to express his authority was limited by having him sit in an adjoining room and communicate to the teacher by telephone. And when the experimenter left the room and had another student (actually a confederate) give the instructions for him, conformity was also reduced to 20%.

In addition to the role of authority, Milgram's studies also confirmed the role of unanimity in producing conformity. When another research participant (again an experimental confederate) began by giving the shocks but then later refused to continue and the participant was asked to take over, only 10% were obedient. And if two experimenters were present but only one proposed shocking while the other argued for stopping the shocks, all the research participants took the more benevolent advice and did not shock. Finally, in another condition the teacher sat next to the learner and was forced to wear an insulated glove and to hold the learner's hand on the shock pad as he administered the shock. Again, obedience was reduced, this time to only 30%.

Perhaps most telling regarding the important role of the situation were the studies in which Milgram allowed the participants to choose their own shock levels or in which one of the experimenters suggested that they should not actually use the shock machine. In these situations, there was virtually no shocking. These conditions show that people do not like to harm others, and when given a choice they will not. On the other hand, the social situation can create powerful, and potentially deadly, social influence.

Social Psychology in the Public Interest

The Zimbardo Prison Studies and Abu Ghraib

In Milgram's research we can see a provocative demonstration of how people who have power can control the behavior of others. Can our understanding of the social psychological factors that produce conformity and obedience help us explain the events that occurred in 2004 at Abu Ghraib, the Iraqi prison in which U.S. soldiers physically and psychologically tortured their Iraqi prisoners? The social psychologist Philip Zimbardo thinks so. He notes the parallels between the events that occurred at Abu Ghraib and the events that occurred in the "prison study" that he conducted in 1971.



Photo of an Iraqi prisoner being tortured by soldiers at the Abu Ghraib prison. Wikimedia Commons – public domain.

In that study, Zimbardo and his colleagues set up a mock prison. They selected 23 student volunteers and divided them into two groups. One group was chosen to be the “prisoners.” They were picked up at their homes by actual police officers, “arrested,” and brought to the prison to be guarded by the other group of students—the “guards.” The two groups were placed in a setting that was designed to look like a real prison, and the role-play began.

The Zimbardo Prison Study

(click to see video)

The study was expected to run for two weeks. However, on the second day, the prisoners tried to rebel against the guards. The guards quickly moved to stop the rebellion by using both psychological punishment and physical abuse. In the ensuing days, the guards denied the prisoners food, water, and sleep; shot them with fire-extinguisher spray; threw their blankets into the dirt; and stripped them naked. On the fifth night the experimenters witnessed the guards putting bags over the prisoners’ heads, chaining their legs, and marching them around. At this point the researchers stopped the experiment early. The conclusions of Zimbardo’s research were clear: People may be so profoundly influenced by their social situation that they become coldhearted jail masters who torture their victims.

Zimbardo's research can help us understand the events that occurred at Abu Ghraib. Zimbardo acted as an expert witness in the trial of Sergeant Chip Frederick, who was sentenced to eight years in prison for his role in the abuse at Abu Ghraib. Frederick was the Army reservist who was put in charge of the night shift at Tier 1A, where the detainees were abused. During this trial Frederick said, "What I did was wrong, and I don't understand why I did it." Zimbardo believes that Frederick acted exactly like the students in the prison study did. He worked in a prison that was overcrowded, filthy, and dangerous, and where he was expected to maintain control over the Iraqi prisoners—in short, the situation he found himself in was very similar to that of Zimbardo's prison study.

In a recent interview, Zimbardo argued (you can tell that he is a social psychologist) that "human behavior is more influenced by things outside of us than inside." He believes that, despite our moral and religious beliefs and despite the inherent goodness of people, there are times when external circumstances can overwhelm us and we do things we never thought we were capable of doing. He argued that "if you're not aware that this can happen, you can be seduced by evil. We need inoculations against our own potential for evil. We have to acknowledge it. Then we can change it" (Driefus, 2007).

You may wonder whether the extreme behavior of the guards and prisoners in Zimbardo's prison study was unique to the particular social context that he created. Recent research by Stephen Reicher and Alex Haslam (2006) suggests that this is indeed the case. In their research, they recreated Zimbardo's prison experiment while making some small, but important, changes. For one, the prisoners were not "arrested" before the study began, and the setup of the jail was less realistic. Furthermore, the researchers in this experiment told the "guards" and the "prisoners" that the groups were arbitrary and could change over time (that is, that some prisoners might be able to be promoted to guards). The results of this study were entirely different than those found by Zimbardo. Although this study was also stopped early, this was more because the guards felt uncomfortable in their superior position than because the prisoners were being abused. This "prison" simply did not feel like a real prison to the participants, and as a result they did not take on the roles they were assigned. Again, the conclusions are clear—the specifics of the social situation, more than the people themselves, are often the most important determinants of behavior.

Types of Power

One of the most influential theories of power was developed by Bertram Raven and John French (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1992). Raven identified five different types of power—*reward power*, *coercive power*, *legitimate power*, *referent power*, and *expert power* (shown in Table 7.2), arguing that each type of power involves a different type of social influence and that the different types vary in terms of whether their use will create public conformity or private acceptance. Understanding the types of power is important because it allows us to see more clearly the many ways that people can influence others. Let's consider these five types of power, beginning with those that are most likely to produce public conformity only and moving on to those that are more likely to produce private acceptance.

Table 7.2 Types of Power

Reward power	The ability to distribute positive or negative rewards
Coercive power	The ability to dispense punishments
Legitimate power	Authority that comes from a belief on the part of those being influenced that the person has a legitimate right to demand conformity.
Referent power	Influence based on identification with, attraction to, or respect for the power-holder
Expert power	Power that comes from other's beliefs that the power-holder possesses superior skills and abilities

Note. French and Raven proposed five types of power, which differ in their likelihood of producing public conformity or private acceptance.

Reward Power

Reward power occurs *when one person is able to influence others by providing them with positive outcomes*. Bosses have reward power over employees because they are able to increase employees' salary and job benefits, and teachers have reward power over students because they can assign student high marks. The variety of rewards that can be used by the powerful is almost endless and includes verbal praise or approval, the awarding of status or prestige, and even direct financial payment.

The ability to wield reward power over those we want to influence is contingent on the needs of the person being influenced. Power is greater when the person being influenced has a strong desire to obtain the reward, and power is weaker when the individual does not need the reward. A boss will have more influence on an employee who has no other job prospects than on one who is being sought after by other corporations, and expensive presents will be more effective in persuading those who cannot buy the items with their own money. Because the change in behavior that results from reward power is driven by the reward itself, its use is usually more likely to produce public conformity than private acceptance.

Coercive Power

Coercive power is *power that is based on the ability to create negative outcomes for others, for instance by bullying, intimidating, or otherwise punishing*. Bosses have coercive power over employees if they are able (and willing) to punish employees by reducing their salary, demoting them to a lower position, embarrassing them, or firing them. And friends can coerce each other through teasing, humiliation, and ostracism. As with reward power, coercive power is effective only when the person being influenced is dependent upon the power-holder. Furthermore, coercion works only if the person being influenced does not leave the group entirely—people who are punished too much are likely to look for other situations that provide more positive outcomes.

In many cases power-holders use reward and coercive power at the same time—for instance, by both increasing salaries as a result of positive performance but also threatening to reduce them if the performance drops. Because the use of coercion has such negative consequences, authorities are generally more likely to use reward than coercive power (Molm, 1997). Coercion is usually more difficult to use, since it often requires energy to keep the person from avoiding the punishment by leaving the situation altogether. And coercive power is less desirable for both the power-holder and the person being influenced because it creates an environment of negative feelings and distrust that is likely to make interactions difficult, undermine satisfaction, and lead to retaliation against the power-holder (Tepper et al., 2009).

As with reward power, coercive power is more likely to produce public conformity than private acceptance. Furthermore, in both cases the effective use of the power requires that the power-holder continually monitor the behavior of the target to be sure that he or she is complying. This monitoring may itself lead to a sense of mistrust between the two individuals in the relationship. The power-holder feels (perhaps unjustly) that the target is only complying due to the monitoring, whereas the target feels (again perhaps unjustly) that the power-holder does not trust him or her.

Legitimate Power

Whereas reward and coercive power are likely to produce conformity, other types of power, which are not so highly focused around reward and punishment, are more likely to create changes in attitudes as well as behavior (private acceptance). In many ways, then, these sources of power are stronger because they produce real belief change. Legitimate power is *power vested in those who are appointed or elected to positions of authority*, such as teachers, politicians, policemen, and judges, and their power is successful because members of the group accept it as appropriate. We accept that governments can levy taxes and that judges can decide the outcomes of court cases because we see these groups and individuals as valid parts of our society. Individuals with legitimate power can exert substantial influence on their followers. Those with legitimate power may not only create changes in the behavior of others but also have the power to create and change the social norms of the group.

In some cases legitimate power is given to the authority figure as a result of laws or elections, or as part of the norms, traditions, and values of the society. The power that the experimenter had over the research participants in Milgram's study on obedience seems to have been primarily the result of his legitimate power as a respected scientist at an important university. In other cases legitimate power comes more informally, as a result of being a respected group member. People who contribute to the group process and follow group norms gain status within the group and therefore earn legitimate power.

In some cases legitimate power can even be used successfully by those who do not seem to have much power. You may recall that after Hurricane Katrina hit the city of New Orleans in 2005, the people there demanded that the federal government help them rebuild the city. Although these people did not have much reward or coercive power, they were nevertheless perceived as good and respected citizens of the United States. Many U.S. citizens tend to believe that people who do not have as much as others (for instance, those who are very poor) should be treated fairly and that these people may legitimately demand resources from those who have more. This might not always work, but to the extent that it does it represents a type of legitimate power—power that comes from a belief in the appropriateness or obligation to respond to the requests of others with legitimate standing.

Referent Power

People with referent power have *an ability to influence others because they can lead those others to identify with them*. In this case, the person who provides the influence is (a) a member of an important reference group—someone we personally admire and attempt to emulate; (b) a charismatic, dynamic, and persuasive leader; or (c) a person who is particularly attractive or famous (Heath, McCarthy, & Mothersbaugh, 1994; Henrich & Gil-White, 2001; Kamins, 1989; Wilson & Sherrell, 1993). A young child who mimics the opinions or behaviors of an older sibling or a famous baseball player, or a churchgoer who follows the advice of a respected church leader, is influenced by referent power. Referent power generally produces private acceptance rather than public conformity (Kelman, 1961).

The influence brought on by referent power may occur in a passive sense because the person being emulated does not necessarily attempt to influence others, and the person who is being influenced may not even realize that the influence is occurring. In other cases, however, the person with referent power (such as the leader of a cult) may make full use of his or her status as the target of identification or respect to produce change. In either case, referent power is a particularly strong source of influence because it is likely to result in the acceptance of the opinions of the important other.

Expert Power

French and Raven's final source of power is expert power. Experts have knowledge or information, and conforming to those whom we perceive to be experts is useful for making decisions about issues for which we have insufficient expertise. Expert power thus represents *a type of informational influence based on the fundamental desire to obtain valid and accurate information, and where the outcome is likely to be private acceptance*. Conformity to the beliefs or instructions of doctors, teachers, lawyers, and computer experts is an example of expert influence; we assume that these individuals have valid information about their areas of expertise, and we accept their opinions based on this perceived expertise (particularly if their advice seems to be successful in solving problems). Indeed, one method of increasing one's power is to become an expert in a domain. Expert power is increased for those who possess more information about a relevant topic than others do because the others must turn to this individual to gain the information. You can see, then, that if you want to influence others, it can be useful to gain as much information about the topic as you can.

Research Focus

Does Power Corrupt?

Having power provides some benefits for those who have it. In comparison to those with less power, people who have more power over others are more confident and more attuned to potential opportunities in their environment (Anderson & Berdahl, 2002). They are also more likely than are people with less power to take action to meet their goals (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003).

Despite these advantages of having power, a little power goes a long way and having too much can be dangerous, for both the targets of the power and the power-holder himself or herself. In an experiment by David Kipnis (1972), college students played the role of "supervisors" who were supposedly working on a task with other students (the "workers"). According to random assignment to experimental conditions, one half of the supervisors were able to influence the workers through legitimate power only, by sending them messages attempting to persuade them to work harder. The other half of the supervisors were given increased power. In addition to being able to persuade the workers to increase their output through the messages, they were also given both reward power (the ability to give small monetary rewards) and coercive power (the ability to take away earlier rewards).

Although the workers (who were actually preprogrammed) performed equally well in both conditions, the participants who were given more power took advantage of it by more frequently contacting the workers and more frequently threatening them. The students in this condition relied almost exclusively on coercive power rather than attempting to use their legitimate power to develop positive relations with the subordinates.

Although it did not increase the workers' performance, having the extra power had a negative effect on the power-holders' images of the workers. At the end of the study, the supervisors who had been given extra power rated the workers more negatively, were less interested in meeting them, and felt that the only reason the workers did well was to obtain the rewards.

The conclusion of these researchers is clear: Having power may lead people to use it, even though it may not be necessary, which may then lead them to believe that their subordinates are performing only because of the threats. Although using excess

power may be successful in the short run, power that is based exclusively on reward and coercion is not likely to produce a positive environment for either the power-holder or the subordinate. People with power may also be more likely to stereotype people with less power than they have (Depret & Fiske, 1999) and may be less likely to help other people who are in need (van Kleef et al., 2008).

Although this research suggests that people may use power when it is available to them, other research has found that this is not equally true for all people—still another case of a person-situation interaction. Serena Chen and her colleagues (Chen, Lee-Chai, & Bargh, 2001) found that students who had been classified as more self-oriented (in the sense that they considered relationships in terms of what they could and should get out of them for themselves) were more likely to misuse their power, whereas students who were classified as other-oriented were more likely to use their power to help others

Leaders and Leadership

One type of person who has power over others, in the sense that they are able to influence them, are leaders. Leaders are in a position in which they can exert leadership, which is *the ability to direct or inspire others to achieve goals* (Chemers, 2001; Hogg, 2010). Leaders have many different influence techniques at their disposal: In some cases they may give commands and enforce them with reward or coercive power, resulting in public conformity with the commands. In other cases they may rely on well-reasoned technical arguments or inspirational appeals, making use of legitimate, referent, or expert power, with the goal of creating private acceptance and leading their followers to achieve.

Leadership is a classic example of the combined effects of the person and the social situation. Let's consider first the person part of the equation and then turn to consider how the person and the social situation work together to create effective leadership.

Personality and Leadership

One approach to understanding leadership is to focus on person variables. Personality theories of leadership are *explanations of leadership based on the idea that some people are simply "natural leaders" because they possess personality characteristics that make them effective* (Zaccaro, 2007).

One personality variable that is associated with effective leadership is intelligence. Being intelligent improves leadership, as long as the leader is able to communicate in a way that is easily understood by his or her followers (Simonton, 1994, 1995). Other research has found that a leader's social skills, such as the ability to accurately perceive the needs and goals of the group members, are also important to effective leadership. People who are more sociable, and therefore better able to communicate with others, tend to make good leaders (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Sorrentino & Boutillier, 1975). Other variables that relate to leadership effectiveness include verbal skills, creativity, self-confidence, emotional stability, conscientiousness, and agreeableness (Cronshaw & Lord, 1987; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Yukl, 2002). And of course the individual's skills at the task at hand are important. Leaders who have expertise in the area of their leadership will be more effective than those who do not.

Because so many characteristics seem to be related to leader skills, some researchers have attempted to account for leadership not in terms of individual traits but in terms of a package of traits that successful leaders seem to have. Some have considered this in terms of *charisma* (Beyer, 1999; Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Charismatic leaders are *leaders who are enthusiastic, committed, and self-confident; who tend to talk about the importance of group goals at a broad level; and who make personal sacrifices for the group*. Charismatic leaders express views that support and validate existing group norms but that also contain a vision of what the group could or should be. Charismatic leaders use their referent power to motivate, uplift, and inspire others. And research has found a positive relationship between a leader's charisma and effective leadership performance (Simonton, 1988).

Another trait-based approach to leadership is based on the idea that leaders take either *transactional* or *transformational leadership styles* with their subordinates (Avolio &Yammarino, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). *Transactional leaders* are the more regular leaders who work with their subordinates to help them understand what is required of them and to get the job done. *Transformational leaders*, on the other hand, are more like charismatic leaders—they have a vision of where the group is going and attempt to stimulate and inspire their workers to move beyond their present status and to create a new and better future. Transformational leaders are those who can reconfigure or transform the group's norms (Reicher & Hopkins, 2003).



The Google corporation cofounders Larry Page and Sergey Brin are good examples of transformational leaders who have been able to see new visions and to motivate their workers to achieve them. Wikimedia Commons – CC BY 2.0.

Leadership as an Interaction Between the Person and the Situation

Despite the fact that there appear to be at least some personality traits that relate to leadership ability, the most important approaches to understanding leadership take into consideration both the personality characteristics of the leader and the situation in which the leader is operating. In some cases the situation itself is important. For instance, you might remember that President George W. Bush's ratings as a leader increased dramatically after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. This is a classic example of how a situation can influence the perceptions of a leader's skill. In other cases, however, both the situation and the person are critical.

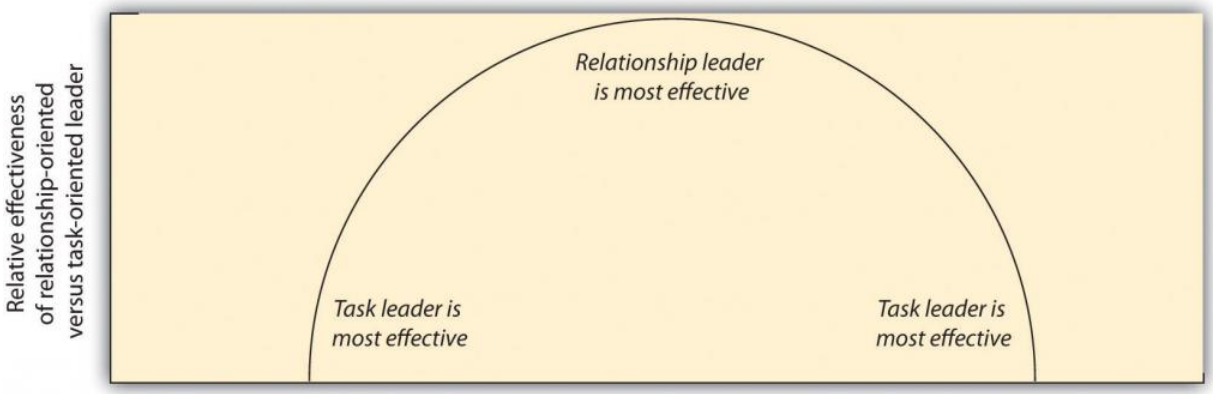
One well-known person-situation approach to understanding leadership effectiveness was developed by Fred Fiedler and his colleagues (Ayman, Chemers, & Fiedler, 1995). The contingency model of leadership effectiveness is a model of leadership *effectiveness that focuses on both person variables and situational variables*. Fielder conceptualized the leadership style of the individual as a relatively stable personality variable and measured it by having people consider all the people they had ever worked with and describe the person that they least liked to work with (their *least preferred coworker*). Those who indicated that they only

somewhat disliked their least preferred coworker are relationship-oriented types of people, who are motivated to have close personal relationships with others. However, those who indicated that they did not like this coworker very much were classified as task-oriented types, who are motivated primarily by getting the job done.

In addition to classifying individuals according to their leadership styles, Fiedler also classified the situations in which groups had to perform their tasks, both on the basis of the task itself and on the basis of the leader's relationship to the group members. Specifically, as shown in Figure 7.9, Fiedler thought that three aspects of the group situation were important:

1. The degree to which the leader already has a good relationship with the group and the support of the group members (*leader-member relations*)
2. The extent to which the task is structured and unambiguous (*task structure*)
3. The leader's level of power or support in the organization (*position power*)

Furthermore, Fielder believed that these factors were ordered in terms of their importance, such that leader-member relationships were more important than task structure, which was in turn more important than position power. As a result, he was able to create eight levels of the "situational favorableness" of the group situation, which roughly range from most favorable to least favorable for the leader. The most favorable relationship involves good relationships, a structured task, and strong power for the leader, whereas the least favorable relationship involves poor relationships, an unstructured task, and weak leader power.



	Favorable situational control				Unfavorable situational control			
Leader-member relations	Good	Good	Good	Good	Bad	Bad	Bad	Bad
Task structure	**Structure**		**Unstructure**		**Structure**		**Unstructure**	
Leader's position of power	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak	Strong	Weak

Figure 7.9 The Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness

The contingency model is interactionist because it proposes that individuals with different leadership styles will differ in effectiveness in different group situations. Task-oriented leaders are expected to be most effective in situations in which the group situation is very favorable because this gives the leader the ability to move the group forward, or in situations in which the group situation is very unfavorable and in which the extreme problems of the situation require the leader to engage in decisive action. However, in the situations of moderate favorableness, which occur when there is a lack of support for the leader or when the problem to be solved is very difficult or unclear, the more relationship-oriented leader is expected to be more effective. In short, the contingency model predicts that task-oriented leaders will be most effective either when the group climate is very favorable and thus there is no need to be concerned about the group members' feelings, or when the group climate is very unfavorable and the task-oriented leader needs to take firm control.

Still another approach to understanding leadership is based on the extent to which a group member embodies the norms of the group. The idea is that people who accept group norms and behave in accordance with them are likely to be seen as particularly good group members and therefore become leaders (Hogg, 2001; Hogg & Van Knippenberg, 2003). Group members who follow group norms are seen as more trustworthy (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002) and are likely to engage in group-oriented behaviors to strengthen their leadership credentials (Platow & van Knippenberg, 2001).

Key Takeaways

- Social power can be defined as the ability of a person to create conformity, even when the people being influenced may attempt to resist those changes.
- Milgram's studies on obedience demonstrated the remarkable extent to which the social situation and people with authority have the power to create obedience.
- One of the most influential theories of power was developed by French and Raven, who identified five different types of power —reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power. The types vary in terms of whether their use is more likely to create public conformity or private acceptance.
- Although power can be abused by those who have it, having power also creates some positive outcomes for individuals.
- Leadership is determined by person variables, situational variables, and by the person-situation interaction. The contingency model of leadership effectiveness is an example of the latter.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Write a paragraph that expresses your opinions about the Holocaust or about another example of obedience to authority. Consider how social psychological research on obedience informs your interpretation of the event.
2. Write a report on Dr. Philip Zimbardo's book, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, http://lucifereffect.com.
3. Provide an example of someone who has each of the types of power discussed in this section.
4. Consider a leader whom you have worked with in the past. What types of leadership did that person use? Were they effective?
5. Choose a recent event that involved a very effective leader or one that involved a very poor one. Analyze the leadership in terms of the topics discussed in this chapter.

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8.2.3: Person, Gender, and Cultural Differences in Conformity

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the social psychological literature concerning differences in conformity between men and women.
2. Review research concerning the relationship between culture and conformity.
3. Explain the concept of psychological reactance and describe how and when it might occur.

Although we have focused to this point on the situational determinants of conformity, such as the number of people in the majority and their unanimity and status, we have not yet considered the question of which people are likely to conform and which people are not. In this section we will consider how personality variables, gender, and culture influence conformity.

Person Differences

Even in cases in which the pressure to conform is strong and a large percentage of individuals do conform (such as in Solomon Asch's line-judging research), not everyone does so. There are usually some people willing and able to go against the prevailing norm. In Asch's study, for instance, despite the strong situational pressures, 24% of the participants never conformed on any of the trials.

People prefer to have an "optimal" balance between being similar to, and different from, others (Brewer, 2003). When people are made to feel too similar to others, they tend to express their individuality, but when they are made to feel too different from others, they attempt to increase their acceptance by others. Supporting this idea, research has found that people who have lower self-esteem are more likely to conform in comparison with those who have higher self-esteem. This makes sense because self-esteem rises when we know we are being accepted by others, and people with lower self-esteem have a greater need to belong. And people who are dependent on and who have a strong need for approval from others are also more conforming (Bornstein, 1992).

Age also matters, such that individuals who are either younger or older are more easily influenced than individuals who are in their 40s and 50s (Visser & Krosnick, 1998). People who highly identify with the group that is creating the conformity are also more likely to conform to group norms, in comparison to people who don't really care very much (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997; Terry & Hogg, 1996).

However, although there are some differences among people in terms of their tendency to conform (it has even been suggested that some people have a "need for uniqueness" that leads them to be particularly likely to resist conformity; Snyder & Fromkin, 1977), research has generally found that the impact of person variables on conformity is smaller than the influence of situational variables, such as the number and unanimity of the majority.

Gender Differences

Several reviews and meta-analyses of the existing research on conformity and leadership in men and women have now been conducted, and so it is possible to draw some strong conclusions in this regard. In terms of conformity, the overall conclusion from these studies is that that there are only small differences between men and women in the amount of conformity they exhibit, and these differences are influenced as much by the social situation in which the conformity occurs as by gender differences themselves. For instance, in Milgram's studies he found no differences in conformity between men and women.

On average, men and women have different levels of self-concern and other-concern. Men are, on average, more concerned about appearing to have high status and may be able to demonstrate this status by acting independently from the opinions of others. On the other hand, and again although there are substantial individual differences among them, women are, on average, more concerned with connecting to others and maintaining group harmony. Taken together, this means that, at least when they are being observed by others, men are likely to hold their ground, act independently, and refuse to conform, whereas women are more likely to conform to the opinions of others in order to prevent social disagreement. These differences are less apparent when the conformity occurs in private (Eagly, 1978, 1983).

The observed gender differences in conformity have social explanations—namely that women are socialized to be more caring about the desires of others—but there are also evolutionary explanations. Men may be more likely to resist conformity to demonstrate to women that they are good mates. Griskevicius, Goldstein, Mortensen, Cialdini, and Kenrick (2006) found that men, but not women, who had been primed with thoughts about romantic and sexual attraction were less likely to conform to the opinions of others on a subsequent task than were men who had not been primed to think about romantic attraction.

In addition to the public versus private nature of the situation, the topic being discussed also is important, such that both men and women are less likely to conform on topics that they know a lot about, in comparison with topics on which they feel less knowledgeable (Eagly & Chravala, 1986). When the topic is sports, women tend to conform to men, whereas the opposite is true when the topic is fashion. Thus it appears that the small observed differences between men and women in conformity are due, at least in part, to informational influence.

Because men have higher status in most societies, they are more likely to be perceived as effective leaders (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992; Rojahn & Willemsen, 1994; Shackelford, Wood, & Worchel, 1996). And men are more likely to be leaders in most cultures. For instance, in the current U.S. Senate, 83% of the members are men. The percentages also favor men in the U.S. House of Representatives (84%) and the Supreme Court (66%). Similar differences are found in the legislatures of almost all countries. There are also more men than women in leadership roles, and particularly in high-level administrative positions, in many different types of businesses and other organizations. Women are not promoted to positions of leadership as fast as men are in real working groups, even when actual performance is taken into consideration (Geis, Boston, & Hoffman, 1985; Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995).

Men are also more likely than women to emerge and act as leaders in small groups, even when other personality characteristics are accounted for (Bartol & Martin, 1986; Megargee, 1969; Porter, Geis, Cooper, & Newman, 1985). In one experiment, Nyquist and Spence (1986) had pairs of same- and mixed-sex students interact. In each pair there was one highly dominant and one low dominant individual, as assessed by previous personality measures. They found that in pairs in which there was one man and one woman, the dominant man became the leader 90% of the time, but the dominant woman became the leader only 35% of the time.

Keep in mind, however, that the fact that men are perceived as effective leaders, and are more likely to become leaders, does not necessarily mean that they are actually better, more effective leaders than women. Indeed, a meta-analysis studying the *effectiveness* of male and female leaders did not find that there were any gender differences overall (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995) and even found that women excelled over men in some domains. Furthermore, the differences that were found tended to occur primarily when a group was first forming but dissipated over time as the group members got to know one another individually.

One difficulty for women as they attempt to lead is that traditional leadership behaviors, such as showing independence and exerting power over others, conflict with the expected social roles for women. The norms for what constitutes success in corporate life are usually defined in masculine terms, including assertiveness or aggressiveness, self-promotion, and perhaps even macho behavior. It is difficult for women to gain power because to do so they must conform to these masculine norms, and often this goes against their personal beliefs about appropriate behavior (Rudman & Glick, 1999). And when women do take on male models of expressing power, it may backfire on them because they end up being disliked because they are acting nonstereotypically for their gender. In an important U.S. Supreme Court case, a female account executive argued that she was denied promotion (although she was a top performer) because she acted too “masculine,” even though the same behaviors were required for the success of the male coworkers (Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991).

One way that women can react to this “double-bind” in which they must take on masculine characteristics to succeed, but if they do they are not liked, is to adopt more feminine leadership styles, in which they use more interpersonally oriented behaviors such as agreeing with others, acting in a friendly manner, and encouraging subordinates to participate in the decision-making process (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Eagly et al., 1992; Wood, 1987). In short, women are more likely to take on a transformational leadership style than are men—doing so allows them to be effective leaders while not acting in an excessively masculine way (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Egen, 2003).

In sum, women may conform somewhat more than men, although these differences are small and limited to situations in which the responses are made publicly. In terms of leadership effectiveness, there is no evidence that men, overall, make better leaders than do women. However, men do better as leaders on tasks that are “masculine” in the sense that they require the ability to direct and control people. On the other hand, women do better on tasks that are more “feminine” in the sense that they involve creating harmonious relationships among the group members.

Cultural Differences

In addition to gender differences, there is also evidence that conformity is greater in some cultures than others. Your knowledge about the cultural differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures might lead you to think that collectivists will be more conforming than individualists, and there is some support for this. Bond and Smith (1996) analyzed results of 133 studies that had used Asch’s line-judging task in 17 different countries. They then categorized each of the countries in terms of the degree to

which it could be considered collectivist versus individualist in orientation. They found a significant relationship, such that conformity was greater in more collectivist than in individualist countries.

Kim and Markus (1999) analyzed advertisements from popular magazines in the United States and in Korea to see if they differentially emphasized conformity and uniqueness. As you can see in Figure 7.10, they found that while U.S. magazine ads tended to focus on uniqueness ("Choose your own view!" and "Individualize") Korean ads tended to focus more on themes of conformity ("Seven out of 10 people use this product" and "Our company is working toward building a harmonious society").

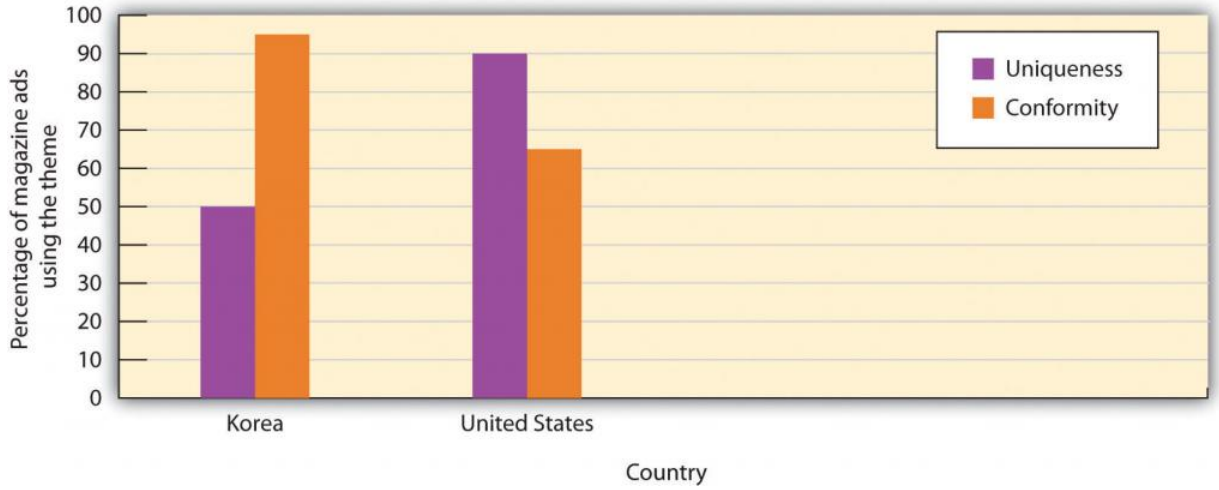


Figure 7.10 Culture and Conformity

Kim and Markus (1999) found that U.S. magazine ads tended to focus on uniqueness whereas Korean ads tended to focus more on conformity.

In summary, although the effects of individual differences on conformity tend to be smaller than those of the social context, they do matter. And gender and cultural differences can also be important. Conformity, like most other social psychological processes, represents an interaction between the situation and the person.

Psychological Reactance

Conformity is usually quite adaptive overall, both for the individuals who conform and for the group as a whole. Conforming to the opinions of others can help us enhance and protect ourselves by providing us with important and accurate information and can help us better relate to others. Following the directives of effective leaders can help a group attain goals that would not be possible without them. And if only half of the people in your neighborhood thought it was appropriate to stop on red and go on green but the other half thought the opposite—and behaved accordingly—there would be problems indeed.

But social influence does not always produce conformity. If we feel that we have the choice to conform or not conform, we may well choose to do so in order to be accepted or to obtain valid knowledge. On the other hand, if we perceive that others are trying to force our conformity, the influence pressure may backfire, resulting in the opposite of what the influencer intends.

Consider an experiment conducted by Pennebaker and Sanders (1976), who attempted to get people to stop writing graffiti on the walls of campus restrooms. In some restrooms they posted a sign that read "Do not write on these walls under any circumstances!" whereas in other restrooms they placed a sign that simply said "Please don't write on these walls." Two weeks later, the researchers returned to the restrooms to see if the signs had made a difference. They found that there was much less graffiti in the second restroom than in the first one. It seems as if people who were given strong pressures to not engage in the behavior were more likely to react against those directives than were people who were given a weaker message.

When individuals feel that their freedom is being threatened by influence attempts and yet they also have the ability to resist that persuasion, they may experience psychological reactance, *a strong motivational state that prevents conformity* (Brehm, 1966; Miron & Brehm, 2006). Reactance is aroused when our ability to choose which behaviors to engage in is eliminated or threatened with elimination. The outcome of the experience of reactance is that people may not conform at all and may even move their opinions or behaviors away from the desires of the influencer.

Reactance represents a desire to restore freedom that is being threatened. A child who feels that his or her parents are forcing him to eat his asparagus may react quite vehemently with a strong refusal to touch the plate. And an adult who feels that she is being

pressured by a car salesman might feel the same way and leave the showroom entirely, resulting in the opposite of the salesman's intended outcome.

Of course, parents are sometimes aware of this potential, and even use "reverse psychology"—for example, telling a child that she cannot go outside when they really want her to, hoping that reactance will occur. In the Broadway musical *The Fantasticks*, neighboring fathers set up to make one's daughter and the other's son fall in love with each other by building a fence between their properties. The fence is seen by the children as an infringement on their freedom to see each other, and as predicted by the idea of reactance, they ultimately fall in love.

In addition to helping us understand the affective determinants of conformity and of failure to conform, reactance has been observed to have its ironic effects in a number of real-world contexts. For instance, Wolf and Montgomery (1977) found that when judges give jury members instructions indicating that they absolutely must not pay any attention to particular information that had been presented in a courtroom trial (because it had been ruled as inadmissible), the jurors were *more* likely to use that information in their judgments. And Bushman and Stack (1996) found that warning labels on violent films (for instance, "This film contains extreme violence—Viewer discretion advised") created more reactance (and thus led participants to be *more* interested in viewing the film) than did similar labels that simply provided information ("This film contains extreme violence"). In another relevant study, Kray, Reb, Galinsky, and Thompson (2004) found that when women were told that they were poor negotiators and would be unable to succeed on a negotiation task, this information led them to work even harder and to be more successful at the task.

Finally, within clinical therapy, it has been argued that people sometimes are less likely to try to reduce the harmful behaviors that they engage in, such as smoking or drug abuse, when the people they care about try too hard to press them to do so (Shoham, Trost, & Rohrbaugh, 2004). One patient was recorded as having reported that his wife kept telling him that he should quit drinking, saying, "If you loved me enough, you'd give up the booze." However, he also reported that when she gave up on him and said instead, "I don't care what you do anymore," he then enrolled in a treatment program (Shoham et al., 2004, p. 177).

Key Takeaways

- Although some person variables predict conformity, overall situational variables are more important.
- There are some small gender differences in conformity. In public situations, men are somewhat more likely to hold their ground, act independently, and refuse to conform, whereas women are more likely to conform to the opinions of others in order to prevent social disagreement. These differences are less apparent when the conformity occurs in private.
- Conformity to social norms is more likely in Eastern, collectivist cultures than in Western, independent cultures.
- Psychological reactance occurs when people feel that their ability to choose which behaviors to engage in is eliminated or threatened with elimination. The outcome of the experience of reactance is that people may not conform at all and may even move their opinions or behaviors away from the desires of the influencer.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. Following this paragraph are some examples of social influence and conformity. In each case, the person who is conforming has changed his or her behavior because of the expressed opinions or behaviors of another person. In some cases the influence of the others is more obvious; in other cases less so. Using the principles discussed in Chapter 1 "Introducing Social Psychology", first consider the likely role of the social situation versus the individual person. Did the person freely engage in the behavior, did the social situation force him to engage in the behavior, or was there some combination of both? Then consider the role of underlying human goals—concern for self and concern for others. Did the conformity occur primarily because the person wanted to feel good about himself or herself or because he or she cared for those around him or her? Then ask yourself about the role of cognition, affect, and behavior. Do you think the conformity was primarily behavioral, or did it involve a real change in the person's thoughts and feelings?

   a. Bill laughed at the movie, even though he didn't think it was all that funny; he realized he was laughing just because all his friends were laughing.
   b. Frank realized that he was starting to like jazz music, in part because his roommate liked it.
   c. Jennifer went to the mall with her friends so that they could help her choose a gown for the upcoming prom.
   d. Sally tried a cigarette at a party because all her friends urged her to.
   e. Phil spent over $150 on a pair of sneakers, even though he couldn't really afford them, because his best friend had a pair.

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8.2.4: Thinking Like a Social Psychologist About Conformity

This chapter has concerned the many and varied ways that conformity influences our everyday lives. Perhaps you were surprised about the wide variety of phenomena—ranging from the unaware imitation of others to leadership to blind obedience to authority—that involve conformity. Yet because you are thinking like a social psychologist, you will realize why conformity occurs and why it is such an important part of our everyday life. We conform to better meet the basic goals of self-concern and other-concern. Conforming helps us do better by helping us make accurate, informed decisions. And conformity helps us be accepted by those we care about.

Because you are now more aware of these factors, you will naturally pay attention to the times when you conform to others and when you influence others to conform. You will see how important—indeed how amazing—the effects of conformity are. You will realize that almost everything we do involves conformity, or perhaps the desire to avoid being too conforming. Furthermore, you will realize (and hopefully use this knowledge to inform your everyday decisions) that conformity is sometimes an important part of societal functioning and that at other times conformity creates bad—indeed horrible—outcomes.

You can use your understanding of conformity to help understand your own behavior. Do you think you conform too much, or too little? Do you think about when you do or don't conform? Are you more of a conformist or an independent thinker—and why do you prefer to be that way? Perhaps you will use your understanding of the power of conformity when you judge others. Do you have a new understanding of the behavior of the soldiers at Abu Ghraib? Do you perhaps now understand better how much they were influenced by the social situation?

Your understanding of the process of conformity may also help you develop more satisfying relations with others. Because you now understand the importance of conformity, you will also understand how to make use of these powers to influence others. If you are in a leadership position, you now have a better idea about the many influence techniques that are available to you and better understand their likely outcomes on others.

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8.2.5: Chapter Summary

Conformity refers to the change in beliefs, opinions, and behaviors that occurs as the result of social influence. The typical outcome of conformity is that peoples' beliefs and behaviors become more similar to those of others around them.

The change in opinions or behavior that occurs when we conform to people whom we believe have accurate information is known as informational conformity. Informational conformity usually results in private acceptance, which is real change in opinions on the part of the individual.

Normative conformity occurs when we express opinions or behave in ways that help us to be accepted or that keep us from being isolated or rejected by those we care about. The outcome of normative conformity is frequently public conformity—a change in behavior that is not accompanied by an actual change in one's private opinion.

Majority influence occurs when the views or behaviors of a larger number of individuals in the current social group prevail. Majority influence may frequently produce public conformity. One powerful example of majority influence can be found in the line-judging studies of Solomon Asch.

Minority influence occurs when the views of a smaller number of individuals prevail. Although less frequent than majority influence, minority influence can occur if the minority expresses their views consistently and confidently. An example is Moscovici's color-judgment study. Because minorities force group members to think more fully about a topic, they can produce more creative thinking.

The extent to which we conform is influenced by the size of the majority group. The increase in the amount of conformity that is produced by adding new members to the majority group, known as the social impact of each group member, is greater for initial majority members than it is for later members.

Conformity decreases sharply when there is any disagreement among the members of the group that is trying to create influence. Unanimity is powerful in part because being the only person who is different is potentially embarrassing, and because we want to be liked by others, we may naturally want to avoid this.

Milgram's study on obedience is an example of the power of an authority to create obedience. Milgram found that, when an authority figure accepted responsibility for the behavior of the individuals, 65% of the participants followed his instructions and administered what they thought was severe and dangerous shock to another person.

The conformity observed in Milgram's study was due in part to the authority of the experimenter. In a replication when the experimenter had lower status, obedience was reduced. Obedience was also reduced when the experimenter's ability to express his authority was limited by having him sit in an adjoining room and communicate to the teacher by telephone. Milgram's studies also confirmed the role of unanimity in producing conformity.

Social power is the ability of one individual to create behavioral or belief changes in another person. Five types of social power—reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, and expert power—vary in terms of whether they are more likely to create private acceptance or public conformity.

Leaders use many types of power to influence others. Some approaches to understanding the nature of leadership have focused on the personality of the leader, finding that variables such as intelligence and sociability are associated with good leaders. Other leadership styles, such as those exhibited by charismatic and transformational leaders, have also been studied. Other approaches, including the contingency model of leadership effectiveness, examine the conditions under which different types of leaders are most likely to be effective.

People with lower self-esteem are more likely to conform than are those with higher self-esteem, and people who are dependent on and who have a strong need for approval from others are also more conforming.

Men, on average, are more concerned about appearing to have high status by acting independently from the opinions of others; they are more likely to resist changing their beliefs in public than are women. In contrast, women, on average, are more concerned with connecting to others and maintaining group harmony; they are more likely to conform to the opinions of others in order to prevent social disagreement.

Men and women differ in their preferred leadership styles, such that women use more relationship-oriented approaches than men use. Although men are *perceived* to be better leaders than women, and often are more likely to *become* leaders, there is no evidence that either men or women are more effective leaders.

When individuals feel that their freedom is being threatened by influence attempts, and yet they also have the ability to resist that persuasion, they may develop psychological reactance and not conform at all. Reactance has been shown to occur in many real-world contexts.

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8.3: Conformity and Obedience

By Jerry M. Burger

Santa Clara University

We often change our attitudes and behaviors to match the attitudes and behaviors of the people around us. One reason for this conformity is a concern about what other people think of us. This process was demonstrated in a classic study in which college students deliberately gave wrong answers to a simple visual judgment task rather than go against the group. Another reason we conform to the norm is because other people often have information we do not, and relying on norms can be a reasonable strategy when we are uncertain about how we are supposed to act. Unfortunately, we frequently misperceive how the typical person acts, which can contribute to problems such as the excessive binge drinking often seen in college students. Obeying orders from an authority figure can sometimes lead to disturbing behavior. This danger was illustrated in a famous study in which participants were instructed to administer painful electric shocks to another person in what they believed to be a learning experiment. Despite vehement protests from the person receiving the shocks, most participants continued the procedure when instructed to do so by the experimenter. The findings raise questions about the power of blind obedience in deplorable situations such as atrocities and genocide. They also raise concerns about the ethical treatment of participants in psychology experiments.

learning objectives

- Become aware of how widespread conformity is in our lives and some of the ways each of us changes our attitudes and behavior to match the norm.
- Understand the two primary reasons why people often conform to perceived norms.
- Appreciate how obedience to authority has been examined in laboratory studies and some of the implications of the findings from these investigations.
- Consider some of the remaining issues and sources of controversy surrounding Milgram's obedience studies.

Introduction

When he was a teenager, my son often enjoyed looking at photographs of me and my wife taken when we were in high school. He laughed at the hairstyles, the clothing, and the kind of glasses people wore "back then." And when he was through with his ridiculing, we would point out that no one is immune to fashions and fads and that someday his children will probably be equally amused by his high school photographs and the trends he found so normal at the time.

Everyday observation confirms that we often adopt the actions and attitudes of the people around us. Trends in clothing, music, foods, and entertainment are obvious. But our views on political issues, religious questions, and lifestyles also reflect to some degree the attitudes of the people we interact with. Similarly, decisions about behaviors such as smoking and drinking are influenced by whether the people we spend time with engage in these activities. Psychologists refer to this widespread tendency to act and think like the people around us as **conformity**.



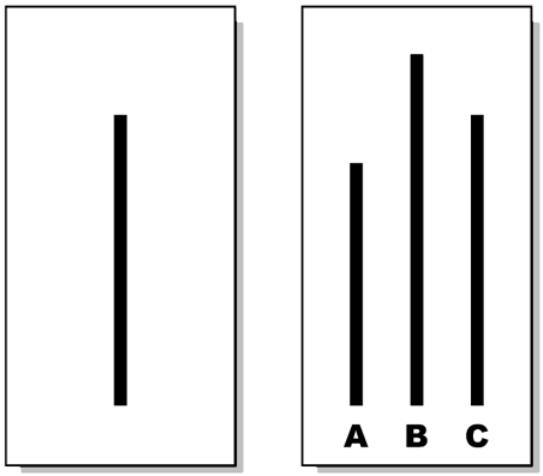
Fashion trends serve as good, and sometimes embarrassing, examples of our own susceptibility to conformity. [Image: bianca francesca, goo.gl/0roq35, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

Conformity

What causes all this conformity? To start, humans may possess an inherent tendency to imitate the actions of others. Although we usually are not aware of it, we often mimic the gestures, body posture, language, talking speed, and many other behaviors of the people we interact with. Researchers find that this mimicking increases the connection between people and allows our interactions to flow more smoothly (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999).

Beyond this automatic tendency to imitate others, psychologists have identified two primary reasons for conformity. The first of these is **normative influence**. When normative influence is operating, people go along with the crowd because they are concerned about what others think of them. We don't want to look out of step or become the target of criticism just because we like different kinds of music or dress differently than everyone else. Fitting in also brings rewards such as camaraderie and compliments.

How powerful is normative influence? Consider a classic study conducted many years ago by Solomon Asch (1956). The participants were male college students who were asked to engage in a seemingly simple task. An experimenter standing several feet away held up a card that depicted one line on the left side and three lines on the right side. The participant's job was to say aloud which of the three lines on the right was the same length as the line on the left. Sixteen cards were presented one at a time, and the correct answer on each was so obvious as to make the task a little boring. Except for one thing. The participant was not alone. In fact, there were six other people in the room who also gave their answers to the line-judgment task aloud. Moreover, although they pretended to be fellow participants, these other individuals were, in fact, confederates working with the experimenter. The real participant was seated so that he always gave his answer after hearing what five other "participants" said. Everything went smoothly until the third trial, when inexplicably the first "participant" gave an obviously incorrect answer. The mistake might have been amusing, except the second participant gave the same answer. As did the third, the fourth, and the fifth participant. Suddenly the real participant was in a difficult situation. His eyes told him one thing, but five out of five people apparently saw something else.



Examples of the cards used in the Asch experiment. How powerful is the normative influence? Would you be tempted to give a clearly incorrect answer, like many participants in the Asch experiment did, to better match the thoughts of a group of peers? [Image: Fred the Oyster, https://goo.gl/Gi5mtu, CC BY-SA 4.0, goo.gl/zVGXn8]

It's one thing to wear your hair a certain way or like certain foods because everyone around you does. But, would participants intentionally give a wrong answer just to conform with the other participants? The confederates uniformly gave incorrect answers on 12 of the 16 trials, and 76 percent of the participants went along with the norm at least once and also gave the wrong answer. In total, they conformed with the group on one-third of the 12 test trials. Although we might be impressed that the majority of the time participants answered honestly, most psychologists find it remarkable that so many college students caved in to the pressure of the group rather than do the job they had volunteered to do. In almost all cases, the participants knew they were giving an incorrect answer, but their concern for what these other people might be thinking about them overpowered their desire to do the right thing.

Variations of Asch's procedures have been conducted numerous times (Bond, 2005; Bond & Smith, 1996). We now know that the findings are easily replicated, that there is an increase in conformity with more confederates (up to about five), that teenagers are more prone to conforming than are adults, and that people conform significantly less often when they believe the confederates will not hear their responses (Berndt, 1979; Bond, 2005; Crutchfield, 1955; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). This last finding is consistent with the notion that participants change their answers because they are concerned about what others think of them. Finally, although we see the effect in virtually every culture that has been studied, more conformity is found in collectivist countries such as Japan and China than in individualistic countries such as the United States (Bond & Smith, 1996). Compared with individualistic cultures, people who live in collectivist cultures place a higher value on the goals of the group than on individual preferences. They also are more motivated to maintain harmony in their interpersonal relations.

The other reason we sometimes go along with the crowd is that people are often a source of information. Psychologists refer to this process as **informational influence**. Most of us, most of the time, are motivated to do the right thing. If society deems that we put litter in a proper container, speak softly in libraries, and tip our waiter, then that's what most of us will do. But sometimes it's not clear what society expects of us. In these situations, we often rely on **descriptive norms** (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). That is, we act the way most people—or most people like us—act. This is not an unreasonable strategy. Other people often have information that we do not, especially when we find ourselves in new situations. If you have ever been part of a conversation that went something like this,

> *"Do you think we should?"*
> *"Sure. Everyone else is doing it.",*

you have experienced the power of informational influence.



Efforts to influence people to engage in healthier or more sustainable behaviors have benefitted from the informational influence. For example, hotels have been able to significantly increase the numbers of people who re-use bath towels (reducing water and energy use) by informing them on signs in their rooms that re-using towels is a typical behavior of other hotel guests. [Image: Infrogmation of New Orleans, https://goo.gl/5P5F0v, CC BY 2.0, goo.gl/BRvSA7]

However, it's not always easy to obtain good descriptive norm information, which means we sometimes rely on a flawed notion of the norm when deciding how we should behave. A good example of how misperceived norms can lead to problems is found in research on binge drinking among college students. Excessive drinking is a serious problem on many campuses (Mita, 2009). There are many reasons why students binge drink, but one of the most important is their perception of the descriptive norm. How much students drink is highly correlated with how much they believe the average student drinks (Neighbors, Lee, Lewis, Fossos, & Larimer, 2007). Unfortunately, students aren't very good at making this assessment. They notice the boisterous heavy drinker at the party but fail to consider all the students not attending the party. As a result, students typically overestimate the descriptive norm for college student drinking (Borsari & Carey, 2003; Perkins, Haines, & Rice, 2005). Most students believe they consume significantly less alcohol than the norm, a miscalculation that creates a dangerous push toward more and more excessive alcohol consumption. On the positive side, providing students with accurate information about drinking norms has been found to reduce overindulgent drinking (Burger, LaSalvia, Hendricks, Mehdipour, & Neudeck, 2011; Neighbors, Lee, Lewis, Fossos, & Walter, 2009).

Researchers have demonstrated the power of descriptive norms in a number of areas. Homeowners reduced the amount of energy they used when they learned that they were consuming more energy than their neighbors (Schultz, Nolan, Cialdini, Goldstein, & Griskevicius, 2007). Undergraduates selected the healthy food option when led to believe that other students had made this choice (Burger et al., 2010). Hotel guests were more likely to reuse their towels when a hanger in the bathroom told them that this is what most guests did (Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008). And more people began using the stairs instead of the elevator when informed that the vast majority of people took the stairs to go up one or two floors (Burger & Shelton, 2011).

Obedience

Although we may be influenced by the people around us more than we recognize, whether we conform to the norm is up to us. But sometimes decisions about how to act are not so easy. Sometimes we are directed by a more powerful person to do things we may not want to do. Researchers who study **obedience** are interested in how people react when given an order or command from someone in a position of authority. In many situations, obedience is a good thing. We are taught at an early age to obey parents, teachers, and police officers. It's also important to follow instructions from judges, firefighters, and lifeguards. And a military would fail to function if soldiers stopped obeying orders from superiors. But, there is also a dark side to obedience. In the name of "following orders" or "just doing my job," people can violate ethical principles and break laws. More disturbingly, obedience often is at the heart of some of the worst of human behavior—massacres, atrocities, and even genocide.



Photographs of victims of Cambodian dictator Pol Pot. From 1975-79 the Khmer Rouge army obediently carried out orders to execute tens of thousands of civilians. [Image: ...your local connection, https://goo.gl/ut9fvk, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

It was this unsettling side of obedience that led to some of the most famous and most controversial research in the history of psychology. Milgram (1963, 1965, 1974) wanted to know why so many otherwise decent German citizens went along with the brutality of the Nazi leaders during the Holocaust. "These inhumane policies may have originated in the mind of a single person," Milgram (1963, p. 371) wrote, "but they could only be carried out on a massive scale if a very large number of persons obeyed orders."

To understand this obedience, Milgram conducted a series of laboratory investigations. In all but one variation of the basic procedure, participants were men recruited from the community surrounding Yale University, where the research was carried out. These citizens signed up for what they believed to be an experiment on learning and memory. In particular, they were told the research concerned the effects of punishment on learning. Three people were involved in each session. One was the participant. Another was the experimenter. The third was a confederate who pretended to be another participant.

The experimenter explained that the study consisted of a memory test and that one of the men would be the teacher and the other the learner. Through a rigged drawing, the real participant was always assigned the teacher's role and the confederate was always the learner. The teacher watched as the learner was strapped into a chair and had electrodes attached to his wrist. The teacher then moved to the room next door where he was seated in front of a large metal box the experimenter identified as a "shock generator." The front of the box displayed gauges and lights and, most noteworthy, a series of 30 levers across the bottom. Each lever was labeled with a voltage figure, starting with 15 volts and moving up in 15-volt increments to 450 volts. Labels also indicated the strength of the shocks, starting with "Slight Shock" and moving up to "Danger: Severe Shock" toward the end. The last two levers were simply labeled "XXX" in red.

Through a microphone, the teacher administered a memory test to the learner in the next room. The learner responded to the multiple-choice items by pressing one of four buttons that were barely within reach of his strapped-down hand. If the teacher saw the correct answer light up on his side of the wall, he simply moved on to the next item. But if the learner got the item wrong, the teacher pressed one of the shock levers and, thereby, delivered the learner's punishment. The teacher was instructed to start with the 15-volt lever and move up to the next highest shock for each successive wrong answer.

In reality, the learner received no shocks. But he did make a lot of mistakes on the test, which forced the teacher to administer what he believed to be increasingly strong shocks. The purpose of the study was to see how far the teacher would go before refusing to continue. The teacher's first hint that something was amiss came after pressing the 75-volt lever and hearing through the wall the learner say "Ugh!" The learner's reactions became stronger and louder with each lever press. At 150 volts, the learner yelled out, "Experimenter! That's all. Get me out of here. I told you I had heart trouble. My heart's starting to bother me now. Get me out of here, please. My heart's starting to bother me. I refuse to go on. Let me out."

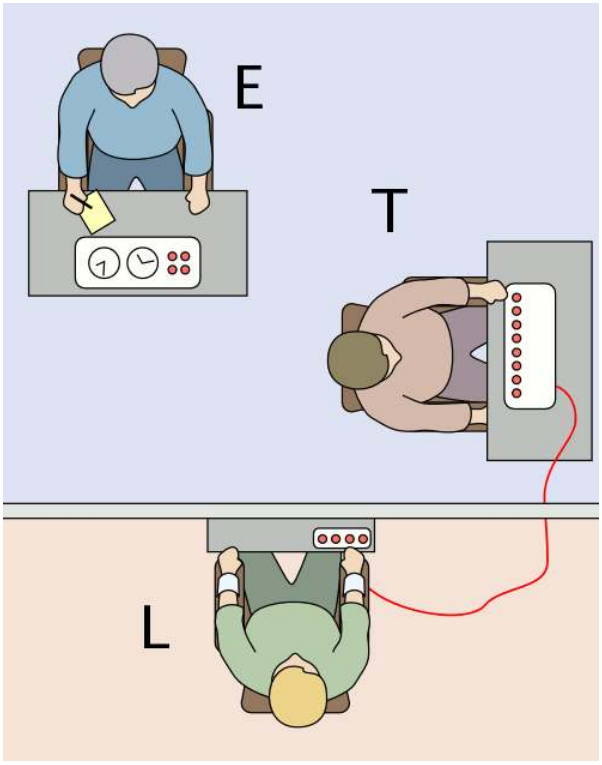


Diagram of the Milgram Experiment in which the "teacher" (T) was asked to deliver a (supposedly) painful electric shock to the "learner"(L). Would this experiment be approved by a review board today? [Image: Fred the Oyster, goo.gl/ZIbQz1, CC BY-SA 4.0, goo.gl/X3i0tq]

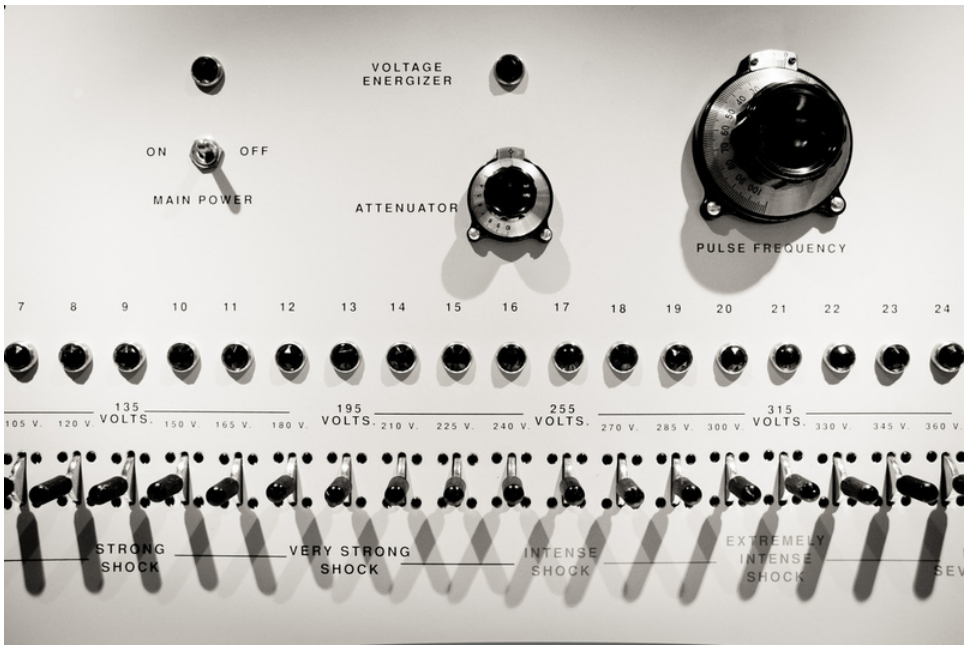
The experimenter's role was to encourage the participant to continue. If at any time the teacher asked to end the session, the experimenter responded with phrases such as, "The experiment requires that you continue," and "You have no other choice, you must go on." The experimenter ended the session only after the teacher stated four successive times that he did not want to continue. All the while, the learner's protests became more intense with each shock. After 300 volts, the learner refused to answer any more questions, which led the experimenter to say that no answer should be considered a wrong answer. After 330 volts, despite vehement protests from the learner following previous shocks, the teacher heard only silence, suggesting that the learner was now physically unable to respond. If the teacher reached 450 volts—the end of the generator—the experimenter told him to

continue pressing the 450 volt lever for each wrong answer. It was only after the teacher pressed the 450-volt lever three times that the experimenter announced that the study was over.

If you had been a participant in this research, what would you have done? Virtually everyone says he or she would have stopped early in the process. And most people predict that very few if any participants would keep pressing all the way to 450 volts. Yet in the basic procedure described here, 65 percent of the participants continued to administer shocks to the very end of the session. These were not brutal, sadistic men. They were ordinary citizens who nonetheless followed the experimenter's instructions to administer what they believed to be excruciating if not dangerous electric shocks to an innocent person. The disturbing implication from the findings is that, under the right circumstances, each of us may be capable of acting in some very uncharacteristic and perhaps some very unsettling ways.

Milgram conducted many variations of this basic procedure to explore some of the factors that affect obedience. He found that obedience rates decreased when the learner was in the same room as the experimenter and declined even further when the teacher had to physically touch the learner to administer the punishment. Participants also were less willing to continue the procedure after seeing other teachers refuse to press the shock levers, and they were significantly less obedient when the instructions to continue came from a person they believed to be another participant rather than from the experimenter. Finally, Milgram found that women participants followed the experimenter's instructions at exactly the same rate the men had.

Milgram's obedience research has been the subject of much controversy and discussion. Psychologists continue to debate the extent to which Milgram's studies tell us something about atrocities in general and about the behavior of German citizens during the Holocaust in particular (Miller, 2004). Certainly, there are important features of that time and place that cannot be recreated in a laboratory, such as a pervasive climate of prejudice and dehumanization. Another issue concerns the relevance of the findings. Some people have argued that today we are more aware of the dangers of blind obedience than we were when the research was conducted back in the 1960s. However, findings from partial and modified replications of Milgram's procedures conducted in recent years suggest that people respond to the situation today much like they did a half a century ago (Burger, 2009).



If you had been "a teacher" in the Milgram experiment, would you have behaved differently than the majority who delivered what they thought were massive 450-volt shocks? [Image: Sharon Drummond, https://goo.gl/uQZGtZ, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

Another point of controversy concerns the ethical treatment of research participants. Researchers have an obligation to look out for the welfare of their participants. Yet, there is little doubt that many of Milgram's participants experienced intense levels of stress as they went through the procedure. In his defense, Milgram was not unconcerned about the effects of the experience on his participants. And in follow-up questionnaires, the vast majority of his participants said they were pleased they had been part of the research and thought similar experiments should be conducted in the future. Nonetheless, in part because of Milgram's studies, guidelines and procedures were developed to protect research participants from these kinds of experiences. Although Milgram's

intriguing findings left us with many unanswered questions, conducting a full replication of his experiment remains out of bounds by today's standards.

Social psychologists are fond of saying that we are all influenced by the people around us more than we recognize. Of course, each person is unique, and ultimately each of us makes choices about how we will and will not act. But decades of research on conformity and obedience make it clear that we live in a social world and that—for better or worse—much of what we do is a reflection of the people we encounter.

Outside Resources

Student Video: Christine N. Winston and Hemali Maher's 'The Milgram Experiment' gives an excellent 3-minute overview of one of the most famous experiments in the history of psychology. It was one of the winning entries in the 2015 Noba Student Video Award.





Video: An example of information influence in a field setting



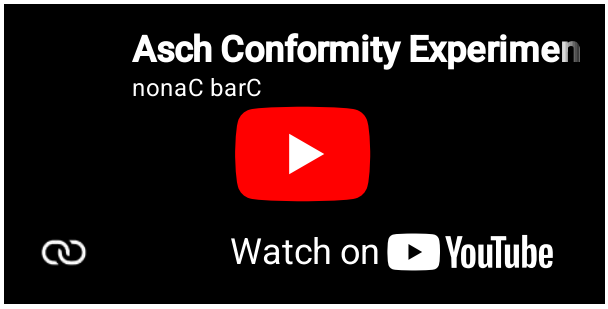


Video: Scenes from a recent partial replication of Milgram's obedience studies





Video: Scenes from a recent replication of Asch's conformity experiment





Web: Website devoted to scholarship and research related to Milgram's obedience studies

http://www.stanleymilgram.com

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you see normative influence operating among you and your peers? How difficult would it be to go against the norm? What would it take for you to not do something just because all your friends were doing it?
2. What are some examples of how informational influence helps us do the right thing? How can we use descriptive norm information to change problem behaviors?
3. Is conformity more likely or less likely to occur when interacting with other people through social media as compared to face-to-face encounters?
4. When is obedience to authority a good thing and when is it bad? What can be done to prevent people from obeying commands to engage in truly deplorable behavior such as atrocities and massacres?
5. In what ways do Milgram's experimental procedures fall outside the guidelines for research with human participants? Are there ways to conduct relevant research on obedience to authority without violating these guidelines?

Vocabulary

Conformity

Changing one's attitude or behavior to match a perceived social norm.

Descriptive norm

The perception of what most people do in a given situation.

Informational influence

Conformity that results from a concern to act in a socially approved manner as determined by how others act.

Normative influence

Conformity that results from a concern for what other people think of us.

Obedience

Responding to an order or command from a person in a position of authority.

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8.4: Persuasion- So Easily Fooled

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This module introduces several major principles in the process of persuasion. It offers an overview of the different paths to persuasion. It then describes how mindless processing makes us vulnerable to undesirable persuasion and some of the "tricks" that may be used against us.

learning objectives

- Recognize the difference between the central and peripheral routes to persuasion.
- Understand the concepts of trigger features, fixed action patterns, heuristics, and mindless thinking, and how these processes are essential to our survival but, at the same time, leave us vulnerable to exploitation.
- Understand some common "tricks" persuasion artists may use to take advantage of us.
- Use this knowledge to make you less susceptible to unwanted persuasion.

Introduction

Have you ever tried to swap seats with a stranger on an airline? Ever negotiated the price of a car? Ever tried to convince someone to recycle, quit smoking, or make a similar change in health behaviors? If so, you are well versed with how persuasion can show up in everyday life.

Persuasion has been defined as "the process by which a message induces change in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors" (Myers, 2011). Persuasion can take many forms. It may, for example, differ in whether it targets public compliance or private acceptance, is short-term or long-term, whether it involves slowly escalating commitments or sudden interventions and, most of all, in the benevolence of its intentions. When persuasion is well-meaning, we might call it education. When it is manipulative, it might be called mind control (Levine, 2003).

Whatever the content, however, there is a similarity to the form of the persuasion process itself. As the advertising commentator Sid Bernstein once observed, "Of course, you sell candidates for political office the same way you sell soap or sealing wax or whatever; because, when you get right down to it, that's the only way anything is sold" (Levine, 2003).

Persuasion is one of the most studied of all social psychology phenomena. This module provides an introduction to several of its most important components.



The instruments of persuasion work the same for selling products or politicians. [Image: if winter ends, https://goo.gl/BxiDC0, CC BY-NC 2.0, goo.gl/VnKlK8]

Two Paths to Persuasion

Persuasion theorists distinguish between the **central** and **peripheral** routes to persuasion (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The central route employs direct, relevant, logical messages. This method rests on the assumption that the audience is motivated, will think carefully about what is presented, and will react on the basis of your arguments. The central route is intended to produce enduring agreement. For example, you might decide to vote for a particular political candidate after hearing her speak and finding her logic and proposed policies to be convincing.

The peripheral route, on the other hand, relies on superficial cues that have little to do with logic. The peripheral approach is the salesman's way of thinking. It requires a target who *isn't* thinking carefully about what you are saying. It requires low effort from the target and often exploits rule-of-thumb **heuristics** that trigger mindless reactions (see below). It may be intended to persuade you to do something you do not want to do and might later be sorry you did. Advertisements, for example, may show celebrities, cute animals, beautiful scenery, or provocative sexual images that have nothing to do with the product. The peripheral approach is also common in the darkest of persuasion programs, such as those of dictators and cult leaders. Returning to the example of voting, you can experience the peripheral route in action when you see a provocative, emotionally charged political advertisement that tugs at you to vote a particular way.

Triggers and Fixed Action Patterns

The central route emphasizes objective communication of information. The peripheral route relies on psychological techniques. These techniques may take advantage of a target's not thinking carefully about the message. The process mirrors a phenomenon in animal behavior known as **fixed action patterns (FAPs)**. These are sequences of behavior that occur in exactly the same fashion, in exactly the same order, every time they're elicited. Cialdini (2008) compares it to a prerecorded tape that is turned on and, once it is, always plays to its finish. He describes it is as if the animal were turning on a tape recorder (Cialdini, 2008). There is the feeding tape, the territorial tape, the migration tape, the nesting tape, the aggressive tape—each sequence ready to be played when a situation calls for it.

In humans fixed action patterns include many of the activities we engage in while mentally on "auto-pilot." These behaviors are so automatic that it is very difficult to control them. If you ever feed a baby, for instance, nearly everyone mimics each bite the baby takes by opening and closing their own mouth! If two people near you look up and point you will automatically look up yourself.

We also operate in a reflexive, non-thinking way when we make many decisions. We are more likely, for example, to be less critical about medical advice dispensed from a doctor than from a friend who read an interesting article on the topic in a popular magazine.

A notable characteristic of fixed action patterns is how they are activated. At first glance, it appears the animal is responding to the overall situation. For example, the maternal tape appears to be set off when a mother sees her hungry baby, or the aggressive tape seems to be activated when an enemy invades the animal's territory. It turns out, however, that the on/off switch may actually be controlled by a specific, minute detail of the situation—maybe a sound or shape or patch of color. These are the hot buttons of the biological world—what Cialdini refers to as "**trigger features**" and biologists call "releasers."



Certain triggers can cause people to switch into an automatic pattern of behavior. In an experiment, potential customers were more easily persuaded to buy when they heard the words "for a good cause." [Image: joelorama, https://goo.gl/FLXszT, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

Humans are not so different. Take the example of a study conducted on various ways to promote a campus bake sale for charity (Levine, 2003). Simply displaying the cookies and other treats to passersby did not generate many sales (only 2 out of 30 potential customers made a purchase). In an alternate condition, however, when potential customers were asked to "buy a cookie for a good cause" the number rose to 12 out of 30. It seems that the phrase "a good cause" triggered a willingness to act. In fact, when the phrase "a good cause" was paired with a locally-recognized charity (known for its food-for-the-homeless program) the numbers held steady at 14 out of 30. When a fictional good cause was used instead (the make believe "Levine House") still 11 out of 30 potential customers made purchases and not one asked about the purpose or nature of the cause. The phrase "for a good cause" was an influential enough hot button that the exact cause didn't seem to matter.

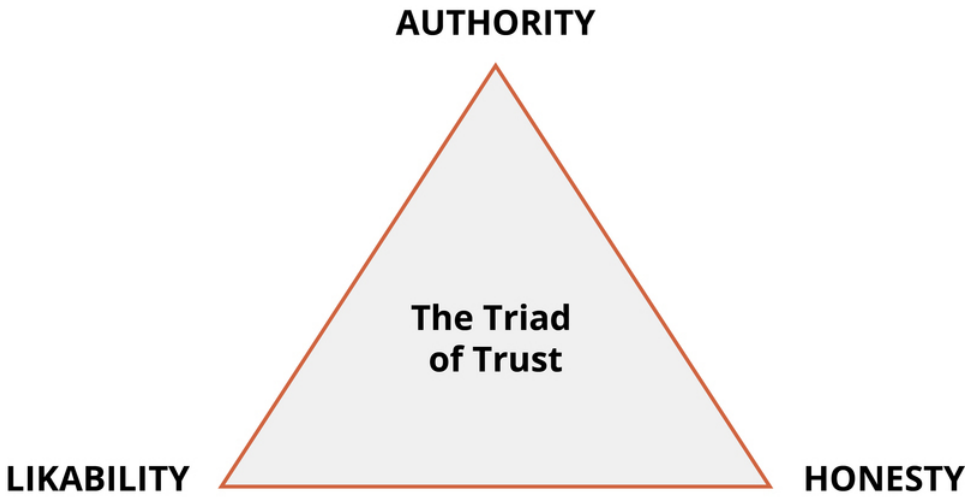
The effectiveness of peripheral persuasion relies on our frequent reliance on these sorts of fixed action patterns and trigger features. These mindless, rules-of-thumb are generally effective shortcuts for coping with the overload of information we all must confront. They serve as heuristics—mental shortcuts-- that enable us to make decisions and solve problems quickly and efficiently. They also, however, make us vulnerable to uninvited exploitation through the peripheral route of persuasion.

The Source of Persuasion: The Triad of Trustworthiness

Effective persuasion requires trusting the source of the communication. Studies have identified three characteristics that lead to trust: perceived authority, honesty, and likability.

When the source appears to have any or all of these characteristics, people not only are more willing to agree to their request but are willing to do so without carefully considering the facts. We assume we are on safe ground and are happy to shortcut the tedious

process of informed decision making. As a result, we are more susceptible to messages and requests, no matter their particular content or how peripheral they may be.



Authority

From earliest childhood, we learn to rely on authority figures for sound decision making because their authority signifies status and power, as well as expertise. These two facets often work together. Authorities such as parents and teachers are not only our primary sources of wisdom while we grow up, but they control us and our access to the things we want. In addition, we have been taught to believe that respect for authority is a moral virtue. As adults, it is natural to transfer this respect to society's designated authorities, such as judges, doctors, bosses, and religious leaders. We assume their positions give them special access to information and power. Usually we are correct, so that our willingness to defer to authorities becomes a convenient shortcut to sound decision making. Uncritical trust in authority may, however, lead to bad decisions. Perhaps the most famous study ever conducted in social psychology demonstrated that, when conditions were set up just so, two-thirds of a sample of psychologically normal men were willing to administer potentially lethal shocks to a stranger when an apparent authority in a laboratory coat ordered them to do so (Milgram, 1974; Burger, 2009).

Uncritical trust in authority can be problematic for several reasons. First, even if the source of the message is a legitimate, well-intentioned authority, they may not always be correct. Second, when respect for authority becomes mindless, expertise in one domain may be confused with expertise in general. To assume there is credibility when a successful actor promotes a cold remedy, or when a psychology professor offers his views about politics, can lead to problems. Third, the authority may not be legitimate. It is not difficult to fake a college degree or professional credential or to buy an official-looking badge or uniform.

Honesty

Honesty is the moral dimension of trustworthiness. Persuasion professionals have long understood how critical it is to their efforts. Marketers, for example, dedicate exorbitant resources to developing and maintaining an image of honesty. A trusted brand or company name becomes a mental shortcut for consumers. It is estimated that some 50,000 new products come out each year. Forrester Research, a marketing research company, calculates that children have seen almost six million ads by the age of 16. An established brand name helps us cut through this volume of information. It signals we are in safe territory. "The real suggestion to convey," advertising leader Theodore MacManus observed in 1910, "is that the man manufacturing the product is an honest man, and the product is an honest product, to be preferred above all others" (Fox, 1997).

Likability



People tend to favor products that are associated with people they like. This is the key ingredient to celebrity endorsements. While there are a lot of factors that can contribute to likability, being physically attractive is one of the most influential. [Image: DFID, https://goo.gl/KfFvvi, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

If we know that celebrities aren't really experts, and that they are being paid to say what they're saying, why do their endorsements sell so many products? Ultimately, it is because we like them. More than any single quality, we trust people we like. Roger Ailes, a public relations adviser to Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush, observed: "If you could master one element of personal communication that is more powerful than anything . . . it is the quality of being likable. I call it the magic bullet, because if your audience likes you, they'll forgive just about everything else you do wrong. If they don't like you, you can hit every rule right on target and it doesn't matter."

The mix of qualities that make a person likable are complex and often do not generalize from one situation to another. One clear finding, however, is that physically attractive people tend to be liked more. In fact, we prefer them to a disturbing extent: Various studies have shown we perceive attractive people as smarter, kinder, stronger, more successful, more socially skilled, better poised, better adjusted, more exciting, more nurturing, and, most important, of higher moral character. All of this is based on no other information than their physical appearance (e.g., Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972).

Manipulating the Perception of Trustworthiness

The perception of trustworthiness is highly susceptible to manipulation. Levine (2003) lists some of the most common psychological strategies that are used to achieve this effect:

Manipulating Trustworthiness	
Testimonials & Endorsements	Presenting the Message as Education
"Word of Mouth"	The Maven

Testimonials and Endorsement

This technique employs someone who people already trust to testify about the product or message being sold. The technique goes back to the earliest days of advertising when satisfied customers might be shown describing how a patent medicine cured their life-long battle with "nerves" or how Dr. Scott's Electric Hair Brush healed their baldness ("My hair (was) falling out, and I was rapidly becoming bald, but since using the brush a thick growth of hair has made its appearance, quite equal to that I had before previous to its falling out," reported a satisfied customer in an 1884 ad for the product). Similarly, Kodak had Prince Henri D'Orleans and others endorse the superior quality of their camera ("The results are marvellous[sic]. The enlargements which you sent me are superb," stated Prince Henri D'Orleans in a 1888 ad).

Celebrity endorsements are a frequent feature in commercials aimed at children. The practice has aroused considerable ethical concern, and research shows the concern is warranted. In a study funded by the Federal Trade Commission, more than 400 children ages 8 to 14 were shown one of various commercials for a model racing set. Some of the commercials featured an endorsement from a famous race car driver, some included real racing footage, and others included neither. Children who watched the celebrity endorser not only preferred the toy cars more but were convinced the endorser was an expert about the toys. This held true for children of all ages. In addition, they believed the toy race cars were bigger, faster, and more complex than real race cars they saw on film. They were also less likely to believe the commercial was staged (Ross et al., 1984).

Presenting the Message as Education

The message may be framed as objective information. Salespeople, for example, may try to convey the impression they are less interested in selling a product than helping you make the best decision. The implicit message is that being informed is in everyone's best interest, because they are confident that when you understand what their product has to offer that you will conclude it is the best choice. Levine (2003) describes how, during training for a job as a used car salesman, he was instructed: "If the customer tells you they do not want to be bothered by a salesperson, your response is 'I'm not a salesperson, I'm a product consultant. I don't give prices or negotiate with you. I'm simply here to show you our inventory and help you find a vehicle that will fit your needs.'"

Word of Mouth

Imagine you read an ad that claims a new restaurant has the best food in your city. Now, imagine a friend tells you this new restaurant has the best food in the city. Who are you more likely to believe? Surveys show we turn to people around us for many decisions. A 1995 poll found that 70% of Americans rely on personal advice when selecting a new doctor. The same poll found that 53% of moviegoers are influenced by the recommendation of a person they know. In another survey, 91% said they're likely to use another person's recommendation when making a major purchase.

Persuasion professionals may exploit these tendencies. Often, in fact, they pay for the surveys. Using this data, they may try to disguise their message as word of mouth from your peers. For example, Cornerstone Promotion, a leading marketing firm that advertises itself as under-the-radar marketing specialists, sometimes hires children to log into chat rooms and pretend to be fans of one of their clients or pays students to throw parties where they subtly circulate marketing material among their classmates.

The Maven

More persuasive yet, however, is to involve peers face-to-face. Rather than over-investing in formal advertising, businesses and organizations may plant seeds at the grassroots level hoping that consumers themselves will then spread the word to each other. The seeding process begins by identifying so-called information hubs—individuals the marketers believe can and will reach the most other people.

The seeds may be planted with established opinion leaders. Software companies, for example, give advance copies of new computer programs to professors they hope will recommend it to students and colleagues. Pharmaceutical companies regularly provide travel expenses and speaking fees to researchers willing to lecture to health professionals about the virtues of their drugs. Hotels give travel agents free weekends at their resorts in the hope they'll later recommend them to clients seeking advice.

There is a Yiddish word, maven, which refers to a person who's an expert or a connoisseur, as in a friend who knows where to get the best price on a sofa or the co-worker you can turn to for advice about where to buy a computer. They (a) know a lot of people, (b) communicate a great deal with people, (c) are more likely than others to be asked for their opinions, and (d) enjoy spreading the word about what they know and think. Most important of all, they are trusted. As a result, mavens are often targeted by persuasion professionals to help spread their message.

Other Tricks of Persuasion

There are many other mindless, mental shortcuts—heuristics and fixed action patterns—that leave us susceptible to persuasion. A few examples:

- "Free Gifts" & Reciprocity
- Social Proof
- Getting a Foot-in-the-Door
- A Door-in-the-Face
- "And That's Not All"
- The Sunk Cost Trap
- Scarcity & Psychological Reactance

Reciprocity

"There is no duty more indispensable than that of returning a kindness," wrote Cicero. Humans are motivated by a sense of equity and fairness. When someone does something for us or gives us something, we feel obligated to return the favor in kind. It triggers one of the most powerful of social norms, the **reciprocity** rule, whereby we feel compelled to repay, in equitable value, what another person has given to us.

Gouldner (1960), in his seminal study of the reciprocity rule, found it appears in every culture. It lays the basis for virtually every type of social relationship, from the legalities of business arrangements to the subtle exchanges within a romance. A salesperson may offer free gifts, concessions, or their valuable time in order to get us to do something for them in return. For example, if a colleague helps you when you're busy with a project, you might feel obliged to support her ideas for improving team processes. You might decide to buy more from a supplier if they have offered you an aggressive discount. Or, you might give money to a charity fundraiser who has given you a flower in the street (Cialdini, 2008; Levine, 2003).

Social Proof

If everyone is doing it, it must be right. People are more likely to work late if others on their team are doing the same, to put a tip in a jar that already contains money, or eat in a restaurant that is busy. This principle derives from two extremely powerful social forces—social comparison and conformity. We compare our behavior to what others are doing and, if there is a discrepancy between the other person and ourselves, we feel pressure to change (Cialdini, 2008).



While few people really like to wait in long lines, we might do it anyway in certain situations. If enough people are willing to wait it (usually) is a sign that there is something worth having at the end. A line in front of a restaurant, movie, etc. is social proof that will likely influence other people to try. [Image: Bill Badzo, https://goo.gl/fPdNVn, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

The principle of **social proof** is so common that it easily passes unnoticed. Advertisements, for example, often consist of little more than attractive social models appealing to our desire to be one of the group. For example, the German candy company Haribo suggests that when you purchase their products you are joining a larger society of satisfied customers: "Kids and grown-ups love it so-- the happy world of Haribo". Sometimes social cues are presented with such specificity that it is as if the target is being manipulated by a puppeteer—for example, the laugh tracks on situation comedies that instruct one not only when to laugh but how to laugh. Studies find these techniques work. Fuller and Skeehy-Skeffington (1974), for example, found that audiences laughed longer and more when a laugh track accompanied the show than when it did not, even though respondents knew the laughs they heard were connived by a technician from old tapes that had nothing to do with the show they were watching. People are particularly susceptible to social proof (a) when they are feeling uncertain, and (b) if the people in the comparison group seem to be similar to ourselves. As P.T. Barnum once said, "Nothing draws a crowd like a crowd."

Commitment and Consistency

Westerners have a desire to both feel and be perceived to act consistently. Once we have made an initial commitment, it is more likely that we will agree to subsequent commitments that follow from the first. Knowing this, a clever persuasion artist might induce someone to agree to a difficult-to-refuse small request and follow this with progressively larger requests that were his target from the beginning. The process is known as getting a **foot in the door** and then **slowly escalating the commitments**.

Paradoxically, we are less likely to say "No" to a large request than we are to a small request when it follows this pattern. This can have costly consequences. Levine (2003), for example, found ex-cult members tend to agree with the statement: "Nobody ever joins a cult. They just postpone the decision to leave."

A Door in the Face

Some techniques bring a paradoxical approach to the escalation sequence by pushing a request to or beyond its acceptable limit and then backing off. In the door-in-the-face (sometimes called the reject-then-compromise) procedure, the persuader begins with a large request they expect will be rejected. They want the door to be slammed in their face. Looking forlorn, they now follow this with a smaller request, which, unknown to the customer, was their target all along.

In one study, for example, Mowen and Cialdini (1980), posing as representatives of the fictitious "California Mutual Insurance Co.," asked university students walking on campus if they'd be willing to fill out a survey about safety in the home or dorm. The survey, students were told, would take about 15 minutes. Not surprisingly, most of the students declined—only one out of four

complied with the request. In another condition, however, the researchers door-in-the-faced them by beginning with a much larger request. “The survey takes about two hours,” students were told. Then, after the subject declined to participate, the experimenters retreated to the target request: “. . . look, one part of the survey is particularly important and is fairly short. It will take only 15 minutes to administer.” Almost twice as many now complied.

And That’s Not All!

The that’s-not-all technique also begins with the salesperson asking a high price. This is followed by several seconds’ pause during which the customer is kept from responding. The salesperson then offers a better deal by either lowering the price or adding a bonus product. That’s-not-all is a variation on door-in-the-face. Whereas the latter begins with a request that will be rejected, however, that’s-not-all gains its influence by putting the customer on the fence, allowing them to waver and then offering them a comfortable way off.

Burger (1986) demonstrated the technique in a series of field experiments. In one study, for example, an experimenter-salesman told customers at a student bake sale that cupcakes cost 75 cents. As this price was announced, another salesman held up his hand and said, “Wait a second,” briefly consulted with the first salesman, and then announced (“that’s-not-all”) that the price today included two cookies. In a control condition, customers were offered the cupcake and two cookies as a package for 75 cents right at the onset. The bonus worked magic: Almost twice as many people bought cupcakes in the that’s-not-all condition (73%) than in the control group (40%).

The Sunk Cost Trap

Sunk cost is a term used in economics referring to nonrecoverable investments of time or money. The trap occurs when a person’s aversion to loss impels them to throw good money after bad, because they don’t want to waste their earlier investment. This is vulnerable to manipulation. The more time and energy a cult recruit can be persuaded to spend with the group, the more “invested” they will feel, and, consequently, the more of a loss it will feel to leave that group. Consider the advice of billionaire investor Warren Buffet: “When you find yourself in a hole, the best thing you can do is stop digging” (Levine, 2003).

Scarcity and Psychological Reactance



People may be more attracted to an opportunity when supplies or time is limited. [Image: Peter Rukavina, goo.gl/KQ2LmT, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0, goo.gl/Toc0ZF]

People tend to perceive things as more attractive when their availability is limited, or when they stand to lose the opportunity to acquire them on favorable terms (Cialdini, 2008). Anyone who has encountered a willful child is familiar with this principle. In a classic study, Brehm & Weinraub (1977), for example, placed 2-year-old boys in a room with a pair of equally attractive toys. One of the toys was placed next to a plexiglass wall; the other was set behind the plexiglass. For some boys, the wall was 1 foot high, which allowed the boys to easily reach over and touch the distant toy. Given this easy access, they showed no particular preference for one toy or the other. For other boys, however, the wall was a formidable 2 feet high, which required them to walk around the barrier to touch the toy. When confronted with this wall of inaccessibility, the boys headed directly for the forbidden fruit, touching it three times as quickly as the accessible toy.

Research shows that much of that 2-year-old remains in adults, too. People resent being controlled. When a person seems too pushy, we get suspicious, annoyed, often angry, and yearn to retain our freedom of choice more than before. Brehm (1966) labeled this the principle of **psychological reactance**.

The most effective way to circumvent psychological reactance is to first get a foot in the door and then escalate the demands so gradually that there is seemingly nothing to react against. Hassan (1988), who spent many years as a higher-up in the “Moonies” cult, describes how they would shape behaviors subtly at first, then more forcefully. The material that would make up the new identity of a recruit was doled out gradually, piece by piece, only as fast as the person was deemed ready to assimilate it. The rule of thumb was to “tell him only what he can accept.” He continues: “Don’t sell them [the converts] more than they can handle . . . . If a recruit started getting angry because he was learning too much about us, the person working on him would back off and let another member move in .....”

Defending Against Unwelcome Persuasion

The most commonly used approach to help people defend against unwanted persuasion is known as the “inoculation” method. Research has shown that people who are subjected to weak versions of a persuasive message are less vulnerable to stronger versions later on, in much the same way that being exposed to small doses of a virus immunizes you against full-blown attacks. In a

classic study by McGuire (1964), subjects were asked to state their opinion on an issue. They were then mildly attacked for their position and then given an opportunity to refute the attack. When later confronted by a powerful argument against their initial opinion, these subjects were more resistant than were a control group. In effect, they developed defenses that rendered them immune.

Sagarin and his colleagues have developed a more aggressive version of this technique that they refer to as “stinging” (Sagarin, Cialdini, Rice, & Serna, 2002). Their studies focused on the popular advertising tactic whereby well-known authority figures are employed to sell products they know nothing about, for example, ads showing a famous astronaut pontificating on Rolex watches. In a first experiment, they found that simply forewarning people about the deviousness of these ads had little effect on peoples’ inclination to buy the product later. Next, they stung the subjects. This time, they were immediately confronted with their gullibility. “Take a look at your answer to the first question. Did you find the ad to be even somewhat convincing? If so, then you got fooled. ... Take a look at your answer to the second question. Did you notice that this ‘stockbroker’ was a fake?” They were then asked to evaluate a new set of ads. The sting worked. These subjects were not only more likely to recognize the manipulativeness of deceptive ads; they were also less likely to be persuaded by them.

Anti-vulnerability trainings such as these can be helpful. Ultimately, however, the most effective defense against unwanted persuasion is to accept just how vulnerable we are. One must, first, accept that it is normal to be vulnerable and, second, to learn to recognize the danger signs when we are falling prey. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Conclusion

This module has provided a brief introduction to the psychological processes and subsequent “tricks” involved in persuasion. It has emphasized the peripheral route of persuasion because this is when we are most vulnerable to psychological manipulation. These vulnerabilities are side effects of “normal” and usually adaptive psychological processes. Mindless heuristics offer shortcuts for coping with a hopelessly complicated world. They are necessities for human survival. All, however, underscore the dangers that accompany any mindless thinking.

Outside Resources

Book: Ariely, D. (2008). Predictably irrational. New York, NY: Harper.

Book: Cialdini, R. B. (2008). Influence: Science and practice (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Book: Gass, R., & Seiter, J. (2010). Persuasion, social influence, and compliance gaining (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Book: Kahneman, D. (2012). Thinking fast and slow. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Book: Levine, R. (2006). The power of persuasion: how we\'re bought and sold. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley

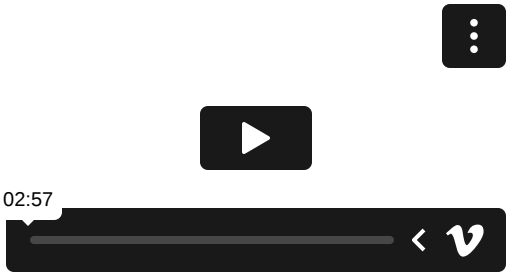
www.amazon.com/The-Power-Pers.../dp/0471763179

Book: Tavris, C., & Aronson, E. (2011). Mistakes were made (but not by me). New York, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Student Video 1: Kyle Ball and Brandon Do's 'Principles of Persuasion'. This is a student-made video highlighting 6 key principles of persuasion that we encounter in our everyday lives. It was one of the winning entries in the 2015 Noba Student Video Award.

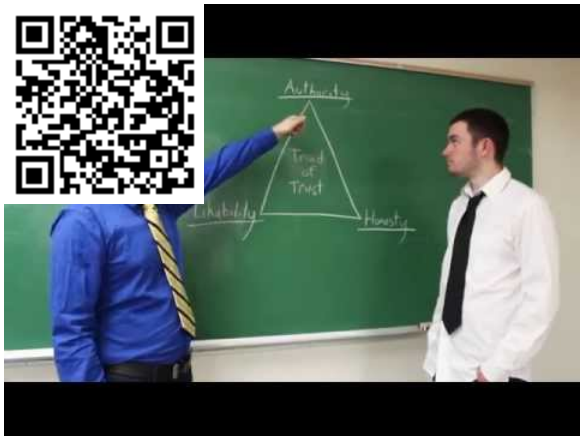


Stu suasion', created by Jake Teeny and Ben Oliveto, compares the central and peripheral routes to per oks at how techniques of persuasion such as Scarcity and Social Proof influence our consumer choices. It was one of the winning entries in the 2015 Noba Student Video Award.



Student Video 3: 'Persuasion in Advertising' is a humorous look at the techniques used by companies to try to convince us to buy their products. The video was created by the team of Edward Puckering, Chris Cameron, and Kevin Smith. It was one of the winning entries in the 2015 Noba Student Video Award.





Video: A brief, entertaining interview with the celebrity pickpocket shows how easily we can be fooled. See A Pickpocket's Tale at

http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2013/01/video-the-art-of-pickpocketing.html

Video: Cults employ extreme versions of many of the principles in this module. An excellent documentary tracing the history of the Jonestown cult is the PBS "American Experience" production, Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple at

www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexpe...-introduction/

Video: Philip Zimbardo's now-classic video, Quiet Rage, offers a powerful, insightful description of his famous Stanford prison study

www.prisonexp.org/documentary.htm

Video: The documentary Outfoxed provides an excellent example of how persuasion can be masked as news and education.

http://www.outfoxed.org/

Video: The video, The Science of Countering Terrorism: Psychological Perspectives, a talk by psychologist Fathali Moghaddam, is an excellent introduction to the process of terrorist recruitment and thinking

sciencestage.com/v/32330/fath...spectives.html

Discussion Questions

1. Imagine you are commissioned to create an ad to sell a new beer. Can you give an example of an ad that would rely on the central route? Can you give an example of an ad that would rely on the peripheral route?
2. The reciprocity principle can be exploited in obvious ways, such as giving a customer a free sample of a product. Can you give an example of a less obvious way it might be exploited? What is a less obvious way that a cult leader might use it to get someone under his or her grip?
3. Which "trick" in this module are you, personally, most prone to? Give a personal example of this. How might you have avoided it?

Vocabulary

Central route to persuasion

Persuasion that employs direct, relevant, logical messages.

Fixed action patterns (FAPs)

Sequences of behavior that occur in exactly the same fashion, in exactly the same order, every time they are elicited.

Foot in the door

Obtaining a small, initial commitment.

Gradually escalating commitments

A pattern of small, progressively escalating demands is less likely to be rejected than a single large demand made all at once.

Heuristics

Mental shortcuts that enable people to make decisions and solve problems quickly and efficiently.

Peripheral route to persuasion

Persuasion that relies on superficial cues that have little to do with logic.

Psychological reactance

A reaction to people, rules, requirements, or offerings that are perceived to limit freedoms.

Social proof

The mental shortcut based on the assumption that, if everyone is doing it, it must be right.

The norm of reciprocity

The normative pressure to repay, in equitable value, what another person has given to us.

The rule of scarcity

People tend to perceive things as more attractive when their availability is limited, or when they stand to lose the opportunity to acquire them on favorable terms.

The triad of trust

We are most vulnerable to persuasion when the source is perceived as an authority, as honest and likable.

Trigger features

Specific, sometimes minute, aspects of a situation that activate fixed action patterns.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.1: Social Class

Topic hierarchy

9.1.1: Social Class

9.1A: Social Class

9.1B: Property

9.1C: Power

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9.1E: Status Inconsistency

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9.1.1: Social Class

A person's **socio-economic status** influences her or his personal and social identity. In society, we rank individuals on their wealth, power, and prestige (Weber [1968] 1978). The calculation of **wealth** is the addition of one's income and assets minus their debts. The **net worth** of a person is wealth whereas income from work and investments is the resources a person has available to access. **Power** is the ability to influence others directly or indirectly and prestige is the esteem or respect associated with social status (Carl 2013). This social stratification system or ranking creates inequality in society and determines one's social position in areas such as income, education, and occupation.

Multiple factors influence social standing, however, people often assume hard work and effort leads to a high status and wealth. Socialization reinforces the ideology that social stratification is a result of personal effort or merit (Carl 2013). The concept of meritocracy is a social ideal or value, but no society exists where the determination of social rank is purely on merit. Inheritance alone shows social standing is not always individually earned. Some people have to put little to no effort to inherit social status and wealth. Additionally, societies operating under a caste system where birth determines lifelong status undermines meritocracy. Caste systems function on the structure that someone born into a low-status group remains low status regardless of their accomplishments, and those born into high-status groups stay high status (Henslin 2011). The caste system reinforces ascribed status rather than achieved to ensure sustainment of multiple roles and occupations in society.

In modern societies, there is evidence of merit based standing in academics and job performance but other factors such as age, disability, gender, race, and region influence life's opportunities and challenges for obtaining social standing. A major flaw of meritocracy is how society measures social contributions. Janitorial and custodial work is necessary in society to reduce illness and manage waste just as much as surgery is to keep people healthy and alive, but surgeons receive greater rewards than janitors do for their contributions.

Marx and Engels (1967) suggested there is a social class division between the capitalists who control the means of production and the workers. In 1985, Erik Wright interjected that people can occupy contradictory class positions throughout their lifetime. People who have occupied various class positions (e.g., bookkeeper to manager to chief operating officer) relate to the experiences of others in those positions, and as a result may feel internal conflict in handling situations between positions or favoring one over another. Late in the twentieth century, Joseph Kahl and Dennis Gilbert (1992) updated the theoretical perspective of Max Weber by developing a six-tier model portraying the United States class structure including underclass, working-poor, working, lower middle, upper middle, and capitalists. The social class model depicts the distribution of property, prestige, and power among society based on income and education.

Each class lifestyle requires a certain level of wealth in order to acquire the material necessities and comforts of life (Henslin 2011). The correlation between the standard of living and quality of life or life chances (i.e., opportunities and barriers) influences one's ability to afford food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, other basic needs, and luxury items. A person's standards of living including income, employment, class, and housing effects their cultural identity.



Figure 9.1.1.1: Man Praying on Sidewalk with Food in Front. (CC BY 4.0; Sergio Omassi).

Social class serves as a marker or indication of resources. These markers are noticeable in the behaviors, customs, and norms of each stratified group (Carl 2013). People living in impoverished communities have different cultural norms and practices compared to those with middle incomes or families of wealth. For example, the urban poor often sleep on cardboard boxes on the ground or on sidewalks and feed themselves by begging, scavenging, and raiding garbage (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). Middle income and wealth families tend to sleep in housing structures and nourish themselves with food from supermarkets or restaurants.

Language and fashion also vary among these classes because of educational attainment, employment, and income. People will use language like “white trash” or “welfare mom” to marginalize people in the lower class and use distinguished labels to identify the upper class such as “noble” and “elite.” Sometimes people often engage in conspicuous consumption or purchase and use certain products (e.g., buy a luxury car or jewelry) to make a social statement about their status (Henslin 2011). Nonetheless, the experience of poor people is very different in comparison to others in the upper and middle classes and the lives of people within each social class may vary based on their position within other social categories including age, disability, gender, race, region, and religion.

Similar to people, nations are also stratified. The most extreme social class differences are between the wealthiest in industrialized countries and the poorest in the least developed nations (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). The most industrialized or modern countries have the greatest property and wealth. Most industrialized nations are leaders in technology and progress allowing them to dominant, control, and access global resources. Industrializing nations have much lower incomes and standards of living than those living in most industrialized nations (Henslin 2011). The least industrialized nations are not modern, and people living in these nations tend to be impoverished and live on farms and in villages.

HIDDEN RULES OF CLASS

Could you survive in poverty, middle class, or wealth? In her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (2005), Dr. Ruby K Payne presents lists of survival skills needed by different societal classes. Test your skills by answering the following questions:

Could you survive in . . . (mark all that apply)

POVERTY

1. ____ find the best rummage sales.
2. ____ locate grocery stores’ garbage bins that have thrown away food.
3. ____ bail someone out of jail. ____ get a gun, even if I have a police record.
4. ____ keep my clothes from being stolen at the laundromat.
5. ____ sniff out problems in a used car.
6. ____ live without a checking account.
7. ____ manage without electricity and a phone.
8. ____ entertain friends with just my personality and stories.
9. ____ get by when I don’t have money to pay the bills.
10. ____ move in half a day.
11. ____ get and use food stamps.
12. ____ find free medical clinics.
13. ____ get around without a car.
14. ____ use a knife as scissors.

MIDDLE CLASS know how to....

1. ____ get my children into Little League, piano lessons, and soccer.
2. ____ set a table properly.
3. ____ find stores that sell the clothing brands my family wears.
4. ____ use a credit card, checking and /or savings account.
5. ____ evaluate insurance: life, disability, 20/80 medical, homeowners, and personal-property.
6. ____ talk to my children about going to college.
7. ____ get the best interest rate on my car loan.
8. ____ help my children with homework and don’t hesitate to make a call if I need more information.

WEALTH, check if you....

1. ____ can read a menu in French, English and another language.
2. ____ have favorite restaurants in different countries around the world.
3. ____ know how to hire a professional decorator to help decorate your home during the holidays.
4. ____ can name your preferred financial advisor, lawyer, designer, hairdresser, or domestic-employment service.
5. ____ have at least two homes that are staffed and maintained.

6. ____ know how to ensure confidentiality and loyalty with domestic staff.
7. ____ use two or three “screens” that keep people whom you don’t wish to see away from you
8. ____ fly in your own plane, the company plane, or the Concorde.
9. ____ know how to enroll your children in the preferred private schools.
10. ____ are on the boards of at least two charities.
11. ____ know the hidden rules of the Junior League.
12. ____ know how to read a corporate balance sheet and analyze your own financial statements.
13. ____ support or buy the work of a particular artist.

IDENTITY TODAY

All forms of media and technology teach culture including values, norms, language, and behaviors by providing information about activities and events of social significance (Griffiths et al. 2015). Media and technology socialize us to think and act within socio-cultural appropriate norms and accepted practices. Watching and listening to people act and behave through media and technology shows the influence this social institution has like family, peers, school, and work on teaching social norms, values, and beliefs.

Technological innovations and advancements have influenced social interactions and communication patterns in the twenty-first century creating new social constructions of reality. These changes, particularly in information technology, have led to further segmentation of society based on user-participant affinity groups (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). The internet and web-based applications link people together transecting local, state, and national boundaries centered on common interests. People who share interests, ideas, values, beliefs, and practices are able to connect to one another through web-based and virtual worlds. These shared interests create solidarity among user-participants while disengaging them from others with differing or opposing interests. **Cybersocial interactions** have reinforced affinity groups creating attitudes and behaviors that strongly encourage tribalism or loyalty to the social group and indifference to others.

Even though there are so many media, news, and information outlets available online, they are homogenous and tell the same stories using the same sources delivering the same message (McManus 1995). Regardless of the news or information outlets one accesses, the coverage of events is predominantly the same with differences focusing on commentary, perspective, and analysis. Shoemaker and Vos (2009) found this practice allow outlets to serve as **gatekeepers** by shaping stories and messages into mass media-appropriate forms and reducing them to a manageable amount for the audience. Fragmentation of stories and messages occurs solely on ideology related to events rather than actual coverage of accounts, reports, or news.

People no longer form and take on identity solely from face-to-face interactions; they also construct themselves from online communication and cybersocial interactions. Approximately 73 percent of adults engage in some sort of online social networking extending their cultural identity to virtual space and time (Pew Research Center 2011). Technological innovations and advancements have even led some people to re-construct a new online identity different from the one they are in face-to-face contexts. Both identities and realities are real to the people who construct and create them, as they are the cultural creators of their personas.

Technology like other resources in society creates inequality among social groups (Griffiths et al. 2015). People with greater access to resources have the ability to purchase and use online services and applications. Privilege access to technological innovations and advancements depend on one’s age, family, education, ethnicity, gender, profession, race, and social class (Kottak and Kozaitis 2012). Signs of technological stratification are visible in the increasing knowledge gap for those with less access to information technology. People with exposure to technology gain further proficiency that makes them more marketable and employable in modern society (Griffiths et al. 2015). Inflation of the knowledge gap results from the lack of technological infrastructure among races, classes, geographic areas creating a digital divide between those who have internet access and those that do not.

NATIVE ANTHROPOLOGIST

Native anthropologists study their own culture. For this project, you will explore your own culture by answering the questions below. Your response to each question must be a minimum of one paragraph consisting of 3-5 sentences, typed, and in ASA format (i.e., paragraphs indented and double-spaced). You must include parenthetical citations if you ask or interview someone in your family or kin group to help you understand and answer any one of the questions. Here is a helpful link with information on citing interviews in ASA format: libguides.tru.ca/c.php?g=194012&p=1277266.

PART 1

1. In examining your background and heritage, what traditions or rituals do you practice regularly? To what extent are traditional cultural group beliefs still held by individuals within the community? To what extent and in what areas has your ethnic or traditional culture changed in comparison to your ancestors?
2. What major stereotypes do you have about other cultural groups based on age, gender, sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, region, and social class?
3. Reflecting on your cultural background, how do you define family?
4. What is the hierarchy of authority in your family?
5. What do you think are the functions and obligations of the family as a large social unit to individual family members? To school? To work? To social events?
6. What do you think are the rights and responsibilities of each family member? For example, do children have an obligation to work and help the family?
7. In your culture, what stage of life is most valued?
8. What behaviors are appropriate or unacceptable for children of various ages? How might these conflict with behaviors taught or encouraged in the school, work, or by other social groups?
9. How does your cultural group compute age? What commemoration is recognized or celebrated, if any (i.e., birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)?

PART 2

1. Considering your cultural heritage, what roles within a group are available to whom and how are they acquired?
2. Are there class or status differences in the expectations of roles within your culture?
3. Do particular roles have positive or malevolent characteristics?
4. Is language competence a requirement or qualification for family or cultural group membership?
5. How do people greet each other?
6. How is deference or respect shown?
7. How are insults expressed?
8. Who may disagree with whom in the cultural group? Under what circumstances? Are mitigating forms used?
9. Which cultural traditions or rituals are written and how widespread is cultural knowledge found in written forms?
10. What roles, attitudes, or personality traits are associated with particular ways of speaking among the cultural group?
11. What is the appropriate decorum or manners among your cultural group?
12. What counts as discipline in terms of your culture, and what doesn't? What is its importance and value?
13. Who is responsible and how is blame ascribed if a child misbehaves?
14. Do means of social control vary with recognized stages in the life cycle, membership in various social categories (i.e., gender, region, class, etc.), or according to setting or offense?
15. What is the role of language in social control? What is the significance of using the first vs. the second language?

PART 3

1. What is considered sacred (religious) and what secular (non-religious)?
2. What religious roles and authority are recognized in the community?
3. What should an outsider not know, or not acknowledge knowing about your religion or culture?
4. Are there any external signs of participation in religious rituals (e.g., ashes, dress, marking)?
5. Are dietary restrictions to be observed including fasting on particular occasions?
6. Are there any prescribed religious procedures or forms of participation if there is a death in the family?
7. What taboos are associated with death and the dead?
8. Who or what is believed to cause illness or death (e.g., biological vs. supernatural or other causes)?
9. Who or what is responsible for treating or curing illness?
10. Reflecting on your culture, what foods are typical or favorites? What are taboo?
11. What rules are observed during meals regarding age and sex roles within the family, the order of serving, seating, utensils used, and appropriate verbal formulas (e.g., how, and if, one may request, refuse, or thank)?
12. What social obligations are there with regard to food giving, preparation, reciprocity, and honoring people?
13. What relation does food have to health? What medicinal uses are made of food, or categories of food?
14. What are the taboos or prescriptions associated with the handling, offering, or discarding of food?
15. What clothing is common or typical among your cultural group? What is worn for special occasions?
16. What significance does dress have for group identity?

17. How does dress differ for age, sex, and social class? What restrictions are imposed for modesty (e.g., can girls wear pants, wear shorts, or shower in the gym)?
18. What is the concept of beauty, or attractiveness in the culture? What characteristics are most valued?
19. What constitutes a compliment of beauty or attractiveness in your culture (e.g., in traditional Latin American culture, telling a woman she is getting fat is a compliment)?
20. Does the color of dress have symbolic significance (e.g., black or white for mourning, celebrations, etc.)?

PART 4

1. In your culture, what individuals and events in history are a source of pride for the group?
2. ow is knowledge of the group's history preserved? How and in what ways is it passed on to new generations (e.g., writings, aphorisms or opinions, proverbs or sayings)?
3. Do any ceremonies or festive activities re-enact historical events?
4. Among your cultural group, what holidays and celebrations are observed? What is their purpose? What cultural values do they intend to inculcate?
5. What aspects of socialization/enculturation do holidays and celebrations observed further?
6. In your culture, what is the purpose of education?
7. What methods for teaching and learning are used at home (e.g., modeling and imitation, didactic stories and proverbs, direct verbal instruction)?
8. What is the role of language in learning and teaching?
9. How many years is it considered 'normal' for children to go to school?
10. Are there different expectations with respect to different groups (e.g., boys vs. girls)? In different subjects?
11. Considering your culture, what kinds of work are prestigious and why?
12. Why is work valued (e.g., financial gain, group welfare, individual satisfaction, promotes group cohesiveness, fulfillment or creation of obligations, position in the community, etc.)?

PART 5

1. How and to what extent may approval or disapproval be expressed in you culture?
2. What defines the concepts of successful among your cultural group?
3. To what extent is it possible or proper for an individual to express personal vs. group goals?
4. What beliefs are held regarding luck and fate?
5. What significance does adherence to traditional culture have for individual success or achievement?
6. What are the perceptions on the acquisition of dominant group culture have on success or achievement?
7. Do parents expect and desire assimilation of children to the dominant culture as a result of education and the acquisition of language?
8. Are the attitudes of the cultural community the same as or different from those of cultural leaders?
9. Among your cultural group, what beliefs or values are associated with concepts of time? How important is punctuality, speed, patience, etc.?
10. Are particular behavioral prescriptions or taboos associated with the seasons?
11. Is there a seasonal organization of work or other activities?
12. How do individuals organize themselves spatially in groups during cultural events, activities, or gatherings (e.g., in rows, circles, around tables, on the floor, in the middle of the room, etc.)?
13. What is the spatial organization of the home in your culture (e.g., particular activities in various areas of the home, areas allotted to children, or open to children,)?
14. What geo-spatial concepts, understandings, and beliefs (e.g., cardinal directions, heaven, hell, sun, moon, stars, natural phenomena, etc.) exist among the cultural group or are known to individuals?
15. Are particular behavioral prescriptions or taboos associated with geo-spatial concepts, understandings, and beliefs? What sanctions are there against individuals violating restrictions or prescriptions?
16. Which animals are valued in your culture, and for what reasons?
17. Which animals are considered appropriate as pets and which are inappropriate? Why?
18. Are particular behavioral prescriptions or taboos associated with particular animals?
19. Are any animals of religious significance? Of historical importance?
20. What forms of art and music are most highly valued?
21. What art medium and musical instruments are traditionally used?

22. Are there any behavioral prescriptions or taboos related to art and music (e.g., both sexes sing, play a particular instrument, paint or photograph nude images, etc.)?

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9.1A: Social Class

Society is stratified into social classes on the basis of wealth, income, educational attainment, and occupation.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the discrepancies in the formation of social classes, as identified by various sociologists

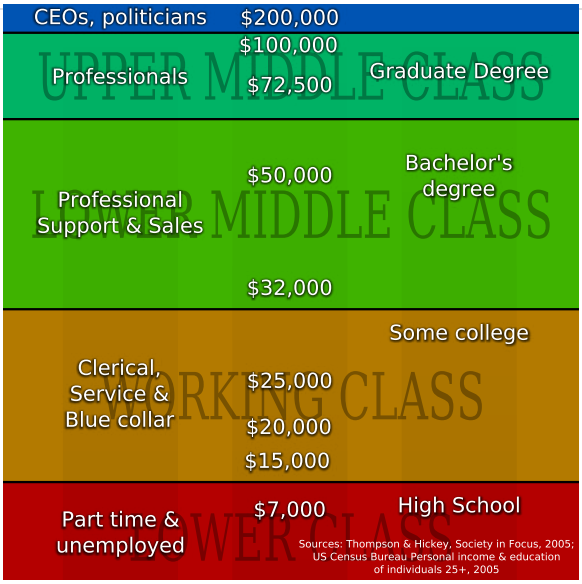
Key Points

- There are competing models for thinking about social classes in the U.S. — most Americans believe in a three tier structure that includes the upper, middle, and lower classes, but popular variations delineate an upper-middle class and a working class.
- Individuals tend to form relationships with others in their own class, and to consequently acculturate to, or learn the values of behaviors of, their own class. This process strengthens distinctions between classes as each group establishes a unique class culture.
- Due to class mobility, in some cases individuals may also acculturate to the culture of another class when ascending or descending in the social order.

Key Terms

- **social network**: The web of a person's social, family, and business contacts, who provide material and social resources and opportunities.
- **acculturate**: To acquire the culture (including systems of value and belief) of the society that one inhabits, starting at birth.
- **Class Culture**: A system of beliefs, values, and behaviors that is particular to a socioeconomic group.

Most social scientists agree that society is stratified into a hierarchical arrangement of social classes. Social classes are groupings of individuals in a hierarchy, usually based on wealth, educational attainment, occupation, income, and membership in a subculture or social network. Social class in the United States is a controversial issue, having many competing definitions, models, and even disagreements over its very existence. Many Americans believe in a simple three-class model that includes upper class, the middle class, and the lower class or working class. More complex models that have been proposed by social scientists describe as many as a dozen class levels.



United States Social Classes: While social scientists offer competing models of class structure, most agree that society is stratified by occupation, income, and educational attainment.

Meanwhile, some scholars deny the very existence of discrete social classes in American society. In spite of debate, most social scientists agree that in the U.S. there is a social class structure in which people are hierarchically ranked. Elsewhere in the world, one's social class may depend more upon race/ethnicity, position at birth, or religious affiliation. For example, in Mexico, society is stratified into classes determined by European or indigenous lineage as well as wealth. In the U.K. class position depends somewhat on family lineage, with members of the nobility traditionally belonging to the aristocracy.

Class Culture

Social class is sometimes presented as a description of how members of society have sorted themselves along a continuum of positions varying in importance, influence, prestige, and compensation. Thought of this way, once individuals identify as being within a class group they begin to adhere to the behaviors they expect of that class. Thus, a person who considers him or herself to be upper class will dress differently from a person who considers him or herself to be working class — one may wear a business suit on a daily basis, while the other wears jeans, for example. By adhering to class expectations, individuals create sharper distinctions between classes than may otherwise exist.

Sociologists studying class distinctions since the 1970s have found that social classes each have unique cultural traits. The phenomenon, referred to as class culture, has been shown to have a strong influence on the mundane lives of people, affecting everything from the manner in which they raise their

children, to how they initiate and maintain romantic relationships, to the color in which they paint their houses. The overall tendency of individuals to associate mostly with those of equal standing as themselves has strengthened class differences. Because individuals' social networks tend to be within their own class, they acculturate to, or learn the values and behaviors of, their own class. Due to class mobility, in some cases individuals may also acculturate to the culture of another class when ascending or descending in the social order. Nonetheless, the impact of class culture on delineating a social hierarchy is significant.

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9.1B: Property

Property is the total of one's possessions and, therefore, may be a better measure of social class than income.

Learning Objectives

- Describe the various forms of property – private, public and collective – and their functions

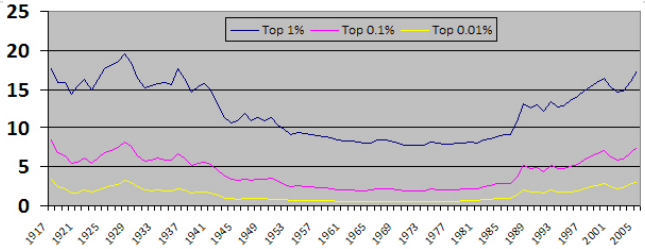
Key Points

- Property goes beyond income as a measure of social class as it reflects the accumulated wealth (e.g., homes, stocks, bonds, savings) in addition to one's earning potential.
- Private property is distinguishable from public property and collective property, which refers to assets owned by a state, community, or government rather than by individuals or a business entity.
- Economic liberals consider private property to be essential for the construction of a prosperous society.
- Socialists view private property relations as limiting the potential of productive forces in the economy.
- Libertarians believe that private property rights are a requisite for rational and efficient economic calculation.

Key Terms

- **libertarian**: A believer in a political doctrine that emphasizes individual liberty and a lack of governmental regulation and oversight both in matters of the economy ('free market') and in personal behavior.
- **economic liberals**: Economic liberalism is the ideological belief in organizing the economy on individualist lines, such that the greatest possible number of economic decisions are made by private individuals and not by collective institutions.

Property refers to the sum total of one's possessions, as well as their regular income. It goes beyond income as a measure of social class, as it reflects wealth accumulated (e.g., homes, stocks, bonds, savings) in addition to one's earning potential. Property is a better overall measure of social class than income, as many individuals who are considered wealthy actually have very small income, and those with less property tend to have less power and prestige.



Income: Income is one form of property, and contributes significantly the measures of wealth. In the United States, the top 1% of the population earns a disproportionate amount of national income, coinciding with their position at the top of the social class hierarchy.

Private property is the ownership, control, employment, ability to dispose of, and bequeath land, capital, and other forms of property by persons and privately owned firms. Private property is distinguishable from public property and collective property, which refers to assets owned by a state, community, or government rather than by individuals or a business entity. The concept of property is not equivalent to that of possession. Property and ownership refer to a socially constructed circumstance conferred upon individuals or collective entities by the state, whereas possession is a physical phenomenon.

Economic liberals consider private property to be essential for the construction of a prosperous society. They believe private ownership of land ensures the land will be put to productive use and its value protected by the landowner. If the owners must pay property taxes, this forces the owners to maintain a productive output from the land to keep taxes current.

On the other hand, socialists view private property relations as limiting the potential of productive forces in the economy. They believe private property becomes useless when it concentrates into centralized, socialized institutions based on private appropriation of revenue until the role of the capitalist becomes redundant.

Lastly, libertarians believe that private property rights are a requisite for rational economic calculation, and that without clearly defined property rights, the prices of goods and services cannot be determined in an "efficient" manner, making the most efficient economic calculation impossible.

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9.1C: Power

Power refers to someone's ability to get others to do his or her will, regardless of whether or not they want to.

Learning Objectives

- Compare the positives and negatives associated with the use of power and how power operates in society

Key Points

- Legitimate power, power given to individuals willingly by others, is called " authority ".
- Illegitimate power, power taken by force or the threat of force, is called " coercion ".
- Coercion is power taken by force or the threat of force.
- Influence, in contrast to coercion, refers to the means by which power is used.
- Because power operates both relationally and reciprocally, sociologists speak of the balance of power between parties to a relationship. All parties to all relationships have some power.

Key Terms

- **coercion**: Actual or threatened force for the purpose of compelling action by another person; the act of coercing.
- **influence**: An action exerted by a person or thing with such power on another to cause change.

Power refers to someone's ability to get others to do his or her will, regardless of whether or not they want to. It is also a measurement of an entity's ability to control its environment, including the behavior of other entities. Legitimate power, power given to individuals willingly by others, is called "authority;" illegitimate power, power taken by force or the threat of force, is called "coercion. " In the corporate environment, power is often expressed as upward or downward. With downward power, a company's superior influences subordinates. When a company exerts upward power, it is the subordinates who influence the decisions of the leader. Often, the study of power in a society is referred to as "politics. "

Power can be seen as evil or unjust, but the exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings. The use of power need not involve coercion (force or the threat of force). At one extreme, it more closely resembles what everyday English-speakers call "influence," or the means by which power is used. Although power can be seen as various forms of constraint on human action, it can also be understood as that which makes action possible, although in a limited scope.

Because power operates both relationally and reciprocally, sociologists speak of the balance of power between parties to a relationship. All parties to all relationships have some power. The sociological examination of power concerns itself with discovering and describing the relative strengths–equal or unequal, stable, or subject to periodic change. Sociologists usually analyze relationships in which the parties have relatively equal or nearly equal power in terms of constraint rather than of power.

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9.1D: Prestige

Prestige refers to the reputation or esteem associated with one's position in society, which is closely tied to their social class.

Learning Objectives

- Compare the two types of prestige – achieved and ascribed, and how prestige is related to power, property and social mobility

Key Points

- Prestige used to be associated with one's family name, but for most people in developed countries, prestige is now generally tied to one's occupation.
- Highly skilled occupations tend to have more prestige associated with them than low skill occupations.
- Prestige is often related to the other two indicators of social class – property and power.
- Prestige is an important element in social mobility.

Key Terms

- **occupation**: A regular activity performed in exchange for payment, including jobs and professions.
- **social class**: A group of people in a stratified hierarchy, based on social power, wealth, educational attainment, and other criteria.
- **prestige**: A measure of how good the reputation of something or someone is, or how favorably something or someone is regarded.

Prestige refers to the reputation or esteem associated with one's position in society. A person can earn prestige by his or her own achievements, which is known as achieved status, or they can be placed in the stratification system by their inherited position, which is called ascribed status. For example, prestige used to be associated with one's family name (ascribed status), but for most people in developed countries, prestige is now generally tied to one's occupation (achieved status). Occupations like physicians or lawyers tend to have more prestige associated with them than occupations like bartender or janitor. An individual's prestige is closely tied to their social class – the higher the prestige of an individual (through their occupation or, sometimes, their family name), the higher their social class.

Prestige is often related to the other two indicators of social class – property and power. A Supreme Court justice, for example, is usually wealthy, enjoys a great deal of prestige, and exercises significant power. In some cases, however, a person ranks differently on these indicators, such as funeral directors. Their prestige is fairly low, but most have higher incomes than college professors, who are among the most educated people in America and have high prestige.

Prestige is a strong element in social mobility. On the one hand, choosing certain occupations or attending certain schools can influence a person's level of prestige. While these opportunities are not equally available to everyone, one's choices can, at least to a limited extent, increase or decrease one's prestige, and lead to social mobility. On the other hand, certain elements of prestige are fixed; family name, place of birth, parents' occupations, etc., are unchangeable parts of prestige that cause social stratification.



Oxford University Ceremony: The job of professor is an example of an occupation that has high prestige even though many professors do not earn incomes in the top economic bracket.

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9.1E: Status Inconsistency

Status inconsistency occurs when an individual's social positions are varied and these variations influence his or her overall social status.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the concept of status inconsistency and how this phenomena can lead to frustration for people

Key Points

- Introduced by the sociologist Gerhard Lenski in the 1950s, status inconsistency theories predict that people whose status is inconsistent will be more frustrated and dissatisfied than people with consistent statuses.
- Sociologists investigate issues of status inconsistency in order to better understand status systems and stratification.
- Max Weber articulated three major dimensions of stratification in his discussion of class, power, and status.

Key Terms

- **sociologist**: A social scientist focused on the study of society, human social interaction, and the rules and processes that bind and separate people not only as individuals, but as members of associations, groups and institutions.
- **status inconsistency**: A situation in which an individual's varied social positions can have both positive and negative influences on his or her social status.
- **Max Weber**: (1864–1920) A German sociologist, philosopher, and political economist who profoundly influenced social theory, social research, and the discipline of sociology itself.

Status inconsistency is a situation where an individual's social positions have both positive and negative influences on his or her social status. Introduced by the sociologist Gerhard Lenski in the 1950s, status inconsistency theories predict that people whose statuses are inconsistent will be more frustrated and dissatisfied than people with consistent statuses. For example, a teacher may have a positive societal image (respect, prestige, etc.), which increases her status but she may earn little money, which simultaneously decreases her status.

All societies have some basis for social stratification, and industrial societies are characterized by multiple dimensions to which some vertical hierarchy may be imputed. The notion of status inconsistency is simple: It is defined as occupying different vertical positions in two or more hierarchies. Sociologists investigate issues of status inconsistency in order to better understand status systems and stratification, and because some sociologists believe that positions of status inconsistency might have strong effects on people's behavior.

Max Weber articulated three major dimensions of stratification in his discussion of class, power, and status. This multifaceted framework provides the background concepts for discussing status inconsistency. Status inconsistency theories predict that people whose status is inconsistent, or higher on one dimension than one another, will be more frustrated and dissatisfied than people with consistent statuses.

Gerhard Lenski originally predicted that people suffering from status inconsistency would favor political actions and parties directed against higher status groups. According to Lenski, the concept can be used to further explain why status groups made up of wealthy minorities who would be presumed conservative tend to be liberal instead. Since Lenski coined the term, status inconsistency has remained controversial with limited empirical verification.



School Teacher: Teachers are often held in high esteem and exert power over students and in local policy, but they tend to have low incomes and little accumulated wealth.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.2: Social Class in the U.S.

Topic hierarchy

9.2A: Social Class in the U.S.

9.2B: Income

9.2C: Wealth

9.2D: Education

9.2E: Occupation

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9.2A: Social Class in the U.S.

Most social scientists agree that American society is stratified into social classes, based on wealth, education, and occupation.

Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast two different social class models

Key Points

- There are competing models for dividing society into discrete classes, but most are based upon a basic three-tiered model that includes an upper class, middle class, and lower class.
- Each social class is thought to share particular cultural traits, such as manner of dress and speech, that reinforce divisions between different classes.
- The "American Dream" holds that U.S. society is meritocratic and status is based on individual achievement, but many social scientists tend to support the idea that inequality is persistent in America and often results from inherited advantages or disadvantages.

Key Terms

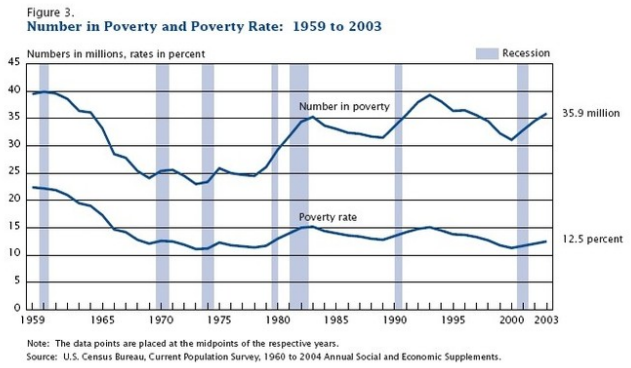
- **social network**: The web of a person's social, family, and business contacts, who provide material and social resources and opportunities.
- **acculturate**: To acquire the culture (including systems of value and belief) of the society that one inhabits, starting at birth.
- **The American Dream**: The belief that with hard work, courage, and determination, anyone can prosper and achieve success.

In the United States, most social scientists agree that society is stratified into a hierarchical arrangement of social classes. Social classes are groupings of individuals in a hierarchy, usually based on wealth, educational attainment, occupation, income, and membership in a subculture or social network. Social class in the United States is a controversial topic; there have been many competing definitions, models, and even disagreements over its very existence. Many Americans believe in a simple three-class model that includes the rich or upper class, the middle class, and the poor or working class. More complex models that have been proposed by social scientists describe as many as a dozen class levels. Meanwhile, some scholars deny the very existence of discrete social classes in American society. In spite of this debate, most social scientists agree that in the United States, there is a social class structure in which people are hierarchically ranked.

Models of U.S. Social Classes

One social class model proposed by sociologists posits that there are six social classes in America. In this model, the upper class in America (3% of the population) is divided into the upper-upper class (1% of the U.S. population), earning hundreds of millions to billions of dollars in income per year, while the lower-upper class (2%) earns millions in annual income. The middle class (40%) is divided into the upper-middle class (14%, earning $76,000 or more per year) and the lower-middle class (26%, earning $46,000 to $75,000 annually). The working class (30%) earns $19,000 to $45,000. The lower class (27%) is divided into the working poor (13%, earning $9000 to $18,000) and the underclass (14%, earning under $9000). This model has gained traction as a tool for thinking about social classes in America, but it notably does not fully account for variations in status based on non-economic factors, such as education and occupational prestige. This critique is somewhat mitigated by the fact that income is often closely aligned with other indicators of status: Those with high incomes likely have substantial education, high-status occupations, and powerful social networks.

Another model for thinking about social class in the United States attributes the following general characteristics to each tier: The upper class has vast accumulated wealth and significant control over corporations and political institutions, and their privilege is usually inherited; the corporate elite is a class of high-salaried stockholders, such as CEOs, who do not necessarily have inherited privilege but have achieved high status through their careers; the upper middle class consists of highly educated salaried professionals whose occupations are held in high esteem, such as lawyers, engineers, and professors; the middle class is the most vaguely defined and largest social class, and is generally thought to include people in mid-level managerial positions or relatively low status professional positions, such as high school teachers and small business owners; the working class generally refers to those without college degrees who do unskilled service work, such as being a sales clerk or housecleaner, and it includes most people whose incomes fall below the poverty line.



U.S. Poverty Rate 1959-2009: This chart depicts the number of people living in poverty during each year from 1959-2003. The poverty rate corresponds to what proportion of Americans live in the lowest economic strata of the hierarchical class system.

Definition of Middle Class

Since the middle class is the largest yet most vaguely defined class, it is important to think about how people come to identify themselves as "middle class." Some people define middle class by income, whereas others are more concerned with values and job description. For example, one may define themselves as middle class if they needed to go to college to obtain their job, despite having a lower income than a blue-collar worker. Another person may believe that since he makes $100,000 a year (regardless of his job *status*), he is middle class. Most people define middle class in terms of income *and* values (such as education and religion).

Class Culture

Sociologists studying class distinctions since the 1970s have found that social classes each have unique cultural traits. The phenomenon, referred to as class culture, has been shown to have a strong influence on the mundane lives of people. Class culture is thought to affect everything from the manner in which people raise their children, to how they initiate and maintain romantic relationships, to the color in which they paint their houses. The overall tendency of individuals to associate mostly with those of equal standing as themselves has strengthened class differences. Because individuals' social networks tend to be within their own class, they acculturate to, or learn the values and behaviors of, their own class. Due to class mobility, in some cases, individuals may also acculturate to the culture of another class when ascending or descending in the social order. Nonetheless, the impact of class culture on the social hierarchy is significant.

Debates over the Existence and Significance of U.S. Social Classes

According to the logic of the American Dream, American society is meritocratic and class is achievement based. In other words, one's membership in a particular social class is based on their educational and career accomplishments, and class distinctions, therefore, are not rigid. Many sociologists dispute the existence of such class mobility and point to the ways in which social class is inherited.

Social theorists who dispute the existence of social classes in the United States tend to argue that society is stratified along a continuous gradation, rather than into delineated categories. In other words, there is inequality in America, with some people attaining higher status and higher standards of living than others. There is no clear place to draw the line separating one status group from the next.

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9.2B: Income

Individual and household income remains one of the most prominent indicators of class status within the United States.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the relationship between income and class status

Key Points

- Personal income is an individual's total earnings from wages, investment earnings, and other sources, and the mostly widely cited data on personal income comes from the U.S. Census Bureau 's population surveys.
- Though individuals in a household may hold low prestige or low earning jobs, having multiple incomes can allow for upward class mobility as a household's wealth increases.
- According to the U.S. Census, men tend to have higher income than women, while Asians and whites earned more than African Americans and Hispanics.

Key Terms

- **U.S. Census Bureau**: The government agency that is responsible for the United States Census, which gathers national demographic and economic data.
- **income**: money one earns by working, or by capitalising off other people's work
- **Bureau of Economic Analysis**: The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is an agency in the United States Department of Commerce that measures important economic statistics, including the gross domestic product of the United States.
- **personal income**: All of an individual's monetary earnings, including salary, investment gains, inheritance, and any other gains.

Income in the United States is most commonly measured by U.S. Census Bureau in terms of either household or individual income and remains one of the most prominent indicators of class status. Income is not one of its causes. In other words, income does not determine the status of an individual or household but rather reflects that status. Some say that income and prestige are the incentives provided by society in order to fill needed positions with the most qualified and motivated personnel possible.

Personal income is an individual's total earnings from wages, investment interest, and other sources. In the United States, the most widely cited personal income statistics are the Bureau of Economic Analysis's personal income and the Census Bureau's per capita money income. The Census Bureau also produces alternative estimates of income and poverty based on broadened definitions of income that include many components that are not included in money income. Estimates are available by demographic characteristics of householders and by the composition of households. According to the US Census, men tend to have higher income than women, while Asians and whites earned more than African Americans and Hispanics.

The combination of two or more incomes allows for households to increase their income substantially without moving higher on the occupational ladder or attaining higher educational degrees. Thus, it is important to remember that the favorable economic position of households in the top two quintiles is in some cases, the result of combined income, rather than the high status of a single worker.



Working class: A monument to the working and supporting classes along Market Street in the heart of San Francisco's Financial District, home to tens-of-thousands of professional upper class and managerial middle class workers.

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9.2C: Wealth

Wealth is commonly measured in terms of net worth, which is the sum of all assets, including home equity, minus all liabilities.

Learning Objectives

- Define “wealth” and explain how it differs from “income”

Key Points

- The wealth — more specifically, the median net worth —of households in the United States varies with relation to race, education, geographic location, and gender.
- While income is often seen as a type of wealth in colloquial language use, wealth and income are different measures of economic prosperity.
- Assets are known as the raw materials of wealth, and they consist primarily of stocks and other financial and non-financial property, particularly homeownership, that allows individuals to increase their wealth.
- Home ownership is one of the main sources of wealth among families in the United States, but can be inaccessible to low income households due to high interest rates.

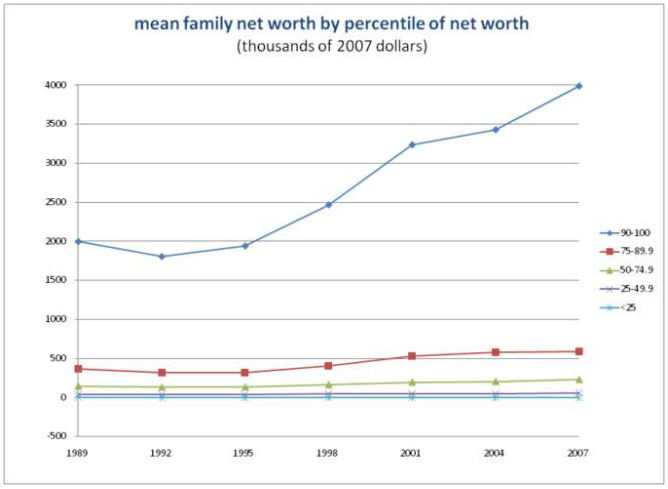
Key Terms

- **Assets**: Any property or object of value that one possesses, usually considered as applicable to the payment of one’s debts.
- **interest rate**: The percentage of an amount of money charged for its use per some period of time (often a year).
- **net worth**: The total assets minus total liabilities of an individual or a company.

Wealth in the United States is commonly measured in terms of net worth, which is the sum of all assets, including home equity, minus all liabilities. The wealth—more specifically, the median net worth—of households in the United States varies with relation to race, education, geographic location, and gender. While income is often seen as a type of wealth in colloquial language use, wealth and income are two substantially different measures of economic prosperity. While there may be a high correlation between income and wealth, the relationship cannot be described as causal.

Assets are known as the raw materials of wealth, and they consist primarily of stocks and other financial and non-financial property, particularly home ownership, that allows individuals to increase their wealth. Home ownership is one of the main sources of wealth among families in the United States. However, there are racial differences in the acquisition of housing, and this inequality reproduces stratification in wealth across race. For white families, home ownership is worth, on average, $60,000 more than it is worth for black families. A lower proportion of people of color than white people have access to the financial resources needed to purchase a home with the intention of letting its value appreciate over time to increase personal wealth. In many communities with large minority populations, high interest rates can cause roadblocks to home ownership.

Data on personal wealth in the United States shows that the inequality between the nation’s richest and poorest citizens is vast. For example, just 400 Americans have the same wealth as half of all Americans combined. In 2007 more than 37 million U.S. citizens, or 12.5% of the population, were classified as poor by the Census Bureau. In 2007 the richest 1% of the American population owned 34.6% of the country’s total wealth, and the next 19% owned 50.5%. Thus, the top 20% of Americans owned 85% of the country’s wealth and the bottom 80% of the population owned 15%.



Mean Family Net Worth by Decile: This graph shows changes in the average net worth of families in each decile of the U.S. income hierarchy. In recent years, the average net worth of high-income families has grown significantly more than that of middle and lower-income families.

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9.2D: Education

In the U.S., educational attainment is strongly correlated to income and occupation, and therefore to social class.

Learning Objectives

- Describe how higher educational attainment relates to social class

Key Points

- American society values post-secondary education very highly; it is one of the main determinants of social class, along with income, wealth, and occupation.
- Tertiary education (or "higher education") is required for many middle and upper class professions.
- Educational attainment is strongly related to income in the United States.

Key Terms

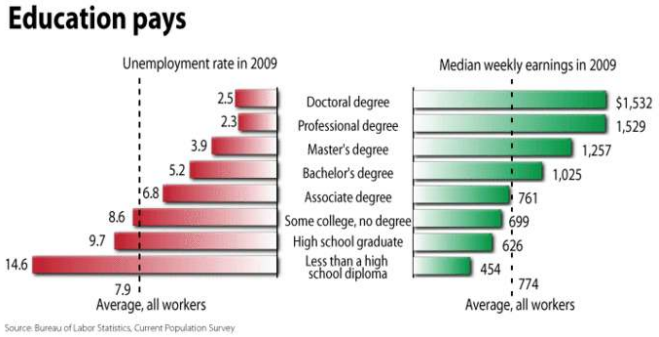
- **low-interest loans**: Money lent with only a small percentage of interest accruing as a charge, often made available to students.
- **scholarship**: Monetary aid given to a student to assist them in paying for an education.
- **tertiary education**: Higher education, including college education and vocational programs beyond high school.

The educational attainment of the U.S. population parallels that of many other industrialized countries, with the vast majority of the population having completed secondary education and a rising number of college graduates outnumbering high school dropouts. As a whole, the U.S. population is spending more years in formal educational programs. American society highly values post-secondary education, or education beyond high school; it is one of the main determinants of class and status in the U.S. In fact, the attainment of post-secondary and graduate degrees is often considered the most important feature distinguishing middle and upper middle class people from lower or working class people. In this regard, universities can be regarded as the gatekeepers of the professional middle class.

Many middle-class professions require post-secondary degrees, which are classified as tertiary education (or "higher education"). Tertiary education is rarely free, but the costs do vary widely; tuition at elite private colleges often exceeds $200,000 for a four-year program while public colleges and universities typically charge much less (for state residents). Many public institutions, such as the University of California system, rival elite private schools in reputation and quality. Many colleges and universities offer scholarships to make higher education more affordable. Government and private lenders also offer low-interest loans. Still, by all accounts, the average cost of education is increasing.

In the U.S., income is strongly related to educational attainment. In 2005, the majority of people with doctorate and professional degrees were counted among the nation's top 15% of income earners. The income of people with bachelor's degrees was above the national median, while the median income of people with some college education remained near the national median. According to U.S. Census Bureau, 9% of persons aged 25 or older had a graduate degree, 27.9% had a bachelor's degree or more, and 53% had attended at least some college. According to the same census, 85% of the U.S. population had graduated from high school. These numbers indicate that the average American does not have a college degree or higher. Having a degree is strongly linked to occupation, and therefore income; degree holders work in more highly skilled professions and earn more on average. Thus, having a bachelor's or graduate degree is a strong indicator of social class.

Income and educational levels differ by race, age, household configuration, and geography. Although the incomes of both men and women are associated with higher educational attainment (higher incomes for higher educational attainment), there remains an income gap between races and genders at each educational level.



Education Pays: This graphic, released by the US Department of Labor, shows the correlation between higher education, employment status, and income. The more education a person attains, the more likely they are to be employed in high paying occupations.

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9.2E: Occupation

In the United States, occupation and occupational prestige are primary indicators of social class, along with income, wealth, and education.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how occupation may affect a person's social class

Key Points

- High status professional occupations, such as those of a doctor, lawyer, or CEO, require high educational attainment and are associated with the upper-middle and upper classes.
- Occupation often corresponds with income and educational attainment, which combined determine a person's social class. However, occupations with high occupational prestige can increase one's social class without a corresponding increase in indicators, such as income.
- To enter the professions, a person usually must hold a professional degree. Examples of professional degrees include JDs for law, MDs for medicine, and MBAs for business.

Key Terms

- **profession**: An occupation, trade, craft, or activity in which one has a professed expertise in a particular area, especially one requiring a high level of skill or training.
- **educational attainment**: Educational attainment is a term commonly used by statisticians to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed.
- **occupational prestige**: The rating of a job based on the social esteem or respect granted to an occupation.

In the United States, occupation is a primary indicator of social class, along with income, wealth, and education. Occupation is closely linked to Americans' identities, and is a salient marker of status. The importance of occupation in part results from the substantial amount of time that American's devote to their careers. The average work week in the United States for those employed full time is 42.9 hours long, and 30% of the population works more than 40 hours per week.

High educational attainment is generally a pre-requisite for entering high status professional occupations. Professional occupations, sometimes called "the professions" or "white collar jobs," include highly skilled positions, such as that of a lawyer, physician, and CEO. Having a professional occupation is associated with being a member of the upper-middle or upper class. To enter the professions, a person usually must hold a professional degree. Examples of professional degrees include JDs for law, MDs for medicine, and MBAs for business. Because the professions are considered highly skilled, require high educational attainment, and provide high incomes, they are associated with high social status.

Sociologists often talk about the status associated with various occupations in terms of occupational prestige. Occupational prestige refers to the esteem in which society holds a particular occupation. Occupational prestige is one way in which occupation may affect a person's social class independent of income and educational attainment. While high status occupations often reap high incomes and require significant education, in some cases these three variables are not linked. For example, being a university professor has high status and requires high educational attainment, but does not always result in high income. Its status depends upon the high esteem in which professors are held. In large part because of high occupational prestige, university professors are generally considered members of the upper-middle class. Conversely, funeral directors generally have high incomes and often high educational attainment. Being a funeral director is not a high status job, however, because Americans do not tend to hold the occupation in high esteem it has low occupational prestige. Funeral directors are, therefore, often considered members of the middle class. As illustrated by this example, occupations with high prestige can raise one's social class even without improving one's economic status.



Occupation: The social class associated with a particular occupation can change over time as the esteem in which the occupation is held changes. In the late-nineteenth century, at the time of this painting, doctors were not members of the upper class. As the occupation has come to require increased education and to depend upon increasing technological expertise, the occupation's prestige has risen. Doctors are now commonly considered members of the upper-middle or upper class.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.3: The Class Structure in the U.S.

Topic hierarchy

9.3A: Class Structure in the U.S.

9.3B: The Upper Class

9.3C: The Upper Middle Class

9.3D: The Lower Middle Class

9.3E: The Working Class

9.3F: The Lower Class

9.3G: Income Distribution

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9.3A: Class Structure in the U.S.

American society is stratified into social classes based on wealth, income, educational attainment, occupation, and social networks.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss America's class structure and its relation to the concept of the "American Dream"

Key Points

- There are competing models for thinking about social classes in the U.S. — most Americans recognize a three-tier structure that includes the upper, middle, and lower classes, but variations delineate an upper-middle class and a working class.
- High income earners likely are substantially educated, have high- status occupations, and maintain powerful social networks.
- According to the "American Dream," American society is meritocratic and class is achievement-based. In other words, one's membership in a particular social class is based on educational and career accomplishments.

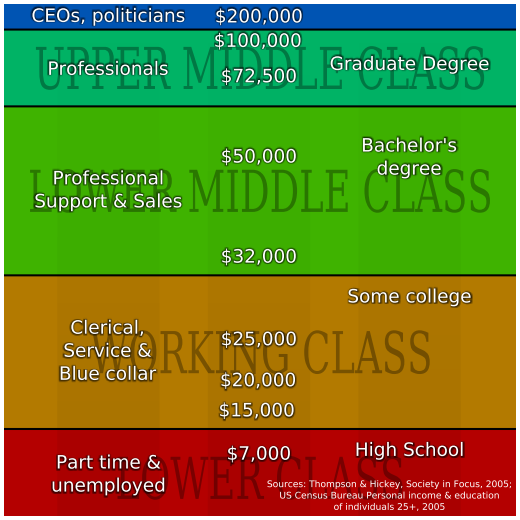
Key Terms

- **social network**: The web of a person's social, family, and business contacts, who provide material and social resources and opportunities.
- **The American Dream**: The belief that with hard work, courage, and determination, anyone can prosper and achieve success.
- **Corporate Elite**: A class of high-salaried stockholders, such as corporate CEOs, who do not necessarily have inherited privilege but have achieved high status through their careers.

Most social scientists in the U.S. agree that society is stratified into social classes. Social classes are hierarchical groupings of individuals that are usually based on wealth, educational attainment, occupation, income, or membership in a subculture or social network. Social class in the United States is a controversial issue, having many competing definitions, models, and even disagreements over its very existence. Many Americans recognize a simple three-tier model that includes the upper class, the middle class, and the lower or working class. Some social scientists have proposed more complex models that may include as many as a dozen class levels. Meanwhile, some scholars deny the very existence of discrete social classes in American society. In spite of debate, most social scientists do agree that in the U.S. people are hierarchically ranked in a social class structure.

Models of U.S. Social Classes

A team of sociologists recently posited that there are six social classes in America. In this model, the upper class (3% of the population) is divided into upper-upper class (1% of the U.S. population, earning hundreds of millions to billions per year) and the lower-upper class (2%, earning millions per year). The middle class (40%) is divided into upper-middle class (14%, earning $76,000 or more per year) and the lower-middle class (26%, earning $46,000 to $75,000 per year). The working class (30%) earns $19,000 to $45,000 per year. The lower class (27%) is divided into working poor (13%, earning $9000 to 18,000 per year) and underclass (14%, earning under $9000 per year). This model has gained traction as a tool for thinking about social classes in America, but it does not fully account for variations in status based on non-economic factors, such as education and occupational prestige. This critique is somewhat mitigated by the fact that income is often closely aligned with other indicators of status; for example, those with high incomes likely have substantial education, high status occupations, and powerful social networks.



United States Social Classes: While social scientists offer competing models of class structure, most agree that society is stratified by occupation, income, and educational attainment.

A commonly used model for thinking about social classes in the U.S. attributes the following general characteristics to each tier: the upper class has vast accumulated wealth and significant control over corporations and political institutions, and their privilege is usually inherited; the corporate elite consists of high-salaried stockholders, such as corporate CEOs, who did not necessarily inherit privilege but have achieved high status through their careers; the upper-middle class consists of highly educated salaried professionals whose occupations are held in high esteem, such as lawyers, engineers, and professors; the middle class (the most vaguely defined and largest social class) is generally thought to include people in mid-level managerial

positions or relatively low status professional positions, such as high school teachers and small business owners; the working class generally refers to those without college degrees who do low level service work, such as working as a sales clerk or housekeeper, and includes most people whose incomes fall below the poverty line. In the above outline of social class, status clearly depends not only on income, but also occupational prestige and educational attainment.

Debates over the Existence and Significance of U.S. Social Classes

According to the "American Dream," American society is meritocratic and class is achievement-based. In other words, membership in a particular social class is based on educational and career accomplishments. Many sociologists dispute the existence of such class mobility and point to the ways in which social class is inherited. For example, a son or daughter of a wealthy individual may carry a higher status and different cultural connotations than a member of the nouveau riche ("new money"). Likewise, being born into a particular social class may confer advantages or disadvantages that increase the likelihood that an adult will remain in the social class into which they were born.

Social theorists who dispute the existence of social classes in the U.S. tend to argue that society is stratified along a continuous gradation, rather than into delineated categories. In other words, there is inequality in America, with some people attaining higher status and higher standards of living than others. But there is no clear place to draw a line separating one status group from the next. Whether one ascribes to the view that classes are discrete groups or levels along a continuum, it is important to remember that all social classes in the United States, except the upper class, consist of tens of millions of people. Thus social classes form social groups so large that they feature considerable internal diversity and any statement regarding a given social class' culture should be seen as a broad generalization.

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9.3B: The Upper Class

The American upper class is the highest socioeconomic bracket in the social hierarchy and is defined by its members' great wealth and power.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the most important characteristics of the upper class in the U.S.

Key Points

- Members of the upper class accumulate wealth through investments and capital gains, rather than through annual salaries.
- Households with net worths of $1 million or more may be identified as members of the upper-most socioeconomic demographic, depending on the class model used.
- Sociologist Leonard Beeghley asserts that all households with a net worth of $1 million or more are considered "rich. " He divides the rich into two sub- groups: the rich and the super-rich.

Key Terms

- **investment**: The expenditure of capital in expectation of deriving income or profit from its use.
- **capital gain**: An increase in the value of a capital asset, such as stock or real estate.

The American upper class refers to the "top layer," or highest socioeconomic bracket, of society in the United States. This social class is most commonly described as those with great wealth and power, and may also be referred to as the capitalist class, or simply as "the rich. " People in this class commonly have immense influence in the nation's political and economic institutions as well as in the media.

Many politicians, heirs to fortunes, top business executives such as CEOs, successful venture capitalists, and celebrities are considered members of the upper class. Some prominent and high-rung professionals may also be included if they attain great influence and wealth. The main distinguishing feature of this class is their source of income. While the vast majority of people and households derive their income from salaries, those in the upper class derive their income primarily from investments and capital gains.

Households with a net worth of $1 million or more may be identified as members of the upper-most socioeconomic demographic, depending on the class model used. While most contemporary sociologists estimate that only 1% of households are members of the upper class, sociologist Leonard Beeghley asserts that all households with a net worth of $1 million or more are considered "rich. " He divides the rich into two sub-groups: the rich and the super-rich. The rich constitute roughly 5% of U.S. households and their wealth is largely in the form of home equity. Other contemporary sociologists, such as Dennis Gilbert, argue that this group is not part of the upper class but rather part of the upper middle class, as its standard of living is largely derived from occupation-generated income and its affluence falls far short of that attained by the top percentile. The super-rich, according to Beeghley, are those able to live off their wealth without depending on occupation-derived income. This demographic constitutes roughly 0.9% of American households. Beeghley's definition of the super-rich is congruent with the definition of upper class employed by most other sociologists. The top.01% of the population, with an annual income of $9.5 million or more, received 5% of the income of the United States in 2007. These 15,000 families have been characterized as the "richest of the rich. "

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9.3C: The Upper Middle Class

The upper-middle class refers to people within the middle class that have high educational attainment, high salaries, and high status jobs.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the central characteristics of the upper-middle class in the U.S.

Key Points

- Members of the upper-middle class have substantially less wealth and prestige than the upper class, but a higher standard of living than the lower-middle class or working class.
- The U.S. upper-middle class consists mostly of white-collar professionals who have a high degree of autonomy in their work. The most common professions of the upper-middle class tend to center on conceptualizing, consulting, and instruction.
- In addition to having autonomy in their work, above-average incomes, and advanced educations, the upper middle class also tends to be powerful; members are influential in setting trends and shaping public opinion.

Key Terms

- **educational attainment**: Educational attainment is a term commonly used by statisticians to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed.
- **salaried professionals**: White-collar employees whose work is largely self-directed and is compensated with an annual salary, rather than an hourly wage.

Sociologists use the term “upper-middle class” to refer to the social group consisting of higher-status members of the middle class. This is in contrast to the term “lower-middle class,” which is used for the group at the opposite end of the middle class stratum, and to the broader term “middle class. ” There is considerable debate as to how to define the upper-middle class. According to the rubric laid out by sociologist Max Weber, the upper-middle class consists of well-educated professionals with graduate degrees and comfortable incomes.

In 1951, sociologist C. Wright Mills conducted one of first major studies of the middle class in America. According to his definition, the middle class consists of an upper-middle class, made up of professionals distinguished by exceptionally high educational attainment and high economic security; and a lower-middle class, consisting of semi-professionals. While the groups overlap, differences between those at the center of both groups are considerable.

Among modern sociologists, the American upper-middle class is defined using income, education, and occupation as primary indicators. There is some debate over what exactly the term “upper-middle class” means, but in academic models, the term generally applies to highly educated, salaried professionals whose work is largely self-directed. The U.S. upper-middle class consists mostly of white-collar professionals who have a high degree of autonomy in their work. The most common professions of the upper-middle class tend to center on conceptualizing, consulting, and instruction. They include such occupations as lawyer, physician, dentist, engineer, professor, architect, civil service executive, and civilian contractor. Many members of the upper-middle class have graduate degrees, such as law, business, or medical degrees, which are often required for professional occupations. Educational attainment is a distinguishing feature of the upper-middle class. Additionally, household incomes in the upper-middle class commonly exceed $100,000, with some smaller one-income earners earning incomes in the high 5-figure range.

In addition to autonomy in their work, above-average incomes, and advanced educations, the upper middle class also tends to be powerful; members are influential in setting trends and shaping public opinion. Moreover, members of the upper-middle class are generally more economically secure than their lower-middle class counterparts. Holding advanced degrees and high status in corporations and institutions tends to insulate the upper-middle class from economic downturns. Members of this class are likely to be in the top income quintile, or the top 20% of the economic hierarchy.



University Campus: Advanced education is one of the most distinguishing features of the upper-middle class.

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9.3D: The Lower Middle Class

The lower-middle class are those with some education and comfortable salaries, but with socioeconomic statuses below the upper-middle class.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the differences between the lower and upper-middle class

Key Points

- The lower-middle class, also sometimes simply referred to as “middle class,” includes roughly one third of U.S. households, and is thought to be growing.
- Individuals in the lower-middle class tend to hold low status professional or white collar jobs, such as school teacher, nurse, or paralegal.
- The lower-middle class is among the largest social classes, rivaled only by the working class, and it is thought to be growing.

Key Terms

- **college education**: Education beyond secondary school, usually culminating in a bachelor’s degree and serving as a necessary credential for middle class occupations.
- **White Collar**: Describes a person who performs professional, managerial, or administrative work for a salary.
- **professional**: A person whose occupation is highly skilled, salaried, and requires high educational attainment.

In developed nations across the world, the lower-middle class is a sub-division of the middle class that refers to households and individuals who are somewhat educated and usually stably employed, but who have not attained the education, occupational prestige, or income of the upper-middle class.

In American society, the middle class is often divided into the lower-middle class and upper-middle class. The lower-middle class (also sometimes simply referred to as the middle class) consists of roughly one third of households—it is roughly twice as large as the upper-middle and upper classes. Lower-middle class individuals commonly have some college education or a bachelor’s degree and earn a comfortable living. The lower-middle class is among the largest social classes, rivaled only by the working class, and it is thought to be growing.

Individuals in the lower-middle class tend to hold low status professional or white collar jobs, such as school teacher, nurse, or paralegal. These types of occupations usually require some education but generally do not require a graduate degree. Lower-middle class occupations usually provide comfortable salaries, but put individuals beneath the top third of incomes.



Elementary School Teacher: Primary school teachers are generally considered lower-middle class. They usually hold college degrees, but often do not hold graduate degrees; they make comfortable incomes, but have low accumulated wealth; their work is largely self-directed, but is not high status.

According to some class models the lower middle class is located roughly between the 52nd and 84thpercentile of society. In terms of personal income distribution in 2005, that would mean gross annual personal incomes from about $32,500 to $60,000. Since 42% of all households had two income earners, with the majority of those in the top 40% of gross income, household income figures would be significantly higher, ranging from roughly $50,000 to $100,000 annually. In terms of educational attainment, 27% of persons had a bachelor’s degree or higher. If the upper middle and upper class combined are to constitute 16% of the population, it becomes clear that some of those in the lower middle class boast college degrees or some college education.

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9.3E: The Working Class

The working class consists of individuals and households with low educational attainment, low status occupations, and below average incomes.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how differences in class culture may affect working-class students who enter the post-secondary education system

Key Points

- Members of the working class usually have a high school diploma or some college education, and may work in low-skilled occupations like retail sales or manual labor.
- Due to differences between middle and working-class cultures, working-class college students may face "culture shock" upon entering the post-secondary education system, with its "middle class" culture.
- Working classes are mainly found in industrialized economies and in the urban areas of non-industrialized economies.

Key Terms

- **working class**: The social class of those who perform physical or low-skilled work for a living, as opposed to the professional or middle class, the upper class, or the upper middle class.
- **Blue Collar**: Describes working-class occupations, especially those involving manual labor.
- **manual labor**: Any work done by hand; usually implying it is unskilled or physically demanding.

Working class is a term used in the social sciences and in ordinary conversation to describe those employed in lower tier jobs (as measured by skill, education, and income), often extending to those who are unemployed or otherwise earning below-average incomes. Working classes are mainly found in industrialized economies and in the urban areas of non-industrialized economies.

In the United States, the parameters of the working class remain vaguely defined and are contentious. Since many members of the working class, as defined by academic models, are often identified in the vernacular as being middle class, there is considerable ambiguity over the term's meaning. In the class models devised by sociologists, the working class comprises between 30 percent and 35 percent of the population, roughly the same percentage as the lower middle class. Those in the working class are commonly employed in low-skilled occupations, including clerical and retail positions and blue collar or manual labor occupations. Low-level, white-collar employees are sometimes included in this class, such as secretaries and call center employees.

Education, for example, can pose an especially intransigent barrier in the United States. Members of the working class commonly have only a high school diploma, although some may have minimal college courses to their credit as well. Due to differences between middle and working-class cultures, working-class college students may face "culture shock" upon entering the post-secondary education system, with its "middle class" culture. Research showing that working-class students are taught to value obedience over leadership and creativity can partially account for the difficulties that many working-class individuals face upon entering colleges and universities.



Battle Strike: Class War: Workers battle with the police during the Minneapolis Teamsters Strike of 1934.

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9.3F: The Lower Class

The lower class consists of those at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy who have low education, low income, and low status jobs.

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between the terms “lower class,” “working poor,” and “underclass”

Key Points

- Low educational attainment and disabilities are two of the main reasons individuals can either struggle to find work or fall into the lower class.
- Generally, the term lower class describes individuals working easily-filled employment positions. These positions typically have little prestige or economic compensation, and do not require workers to have a high school education.
- Lower class households are at the greatest risk of falling below the poverty line if a job holder suddenly becomes unemployed.

Key Terms

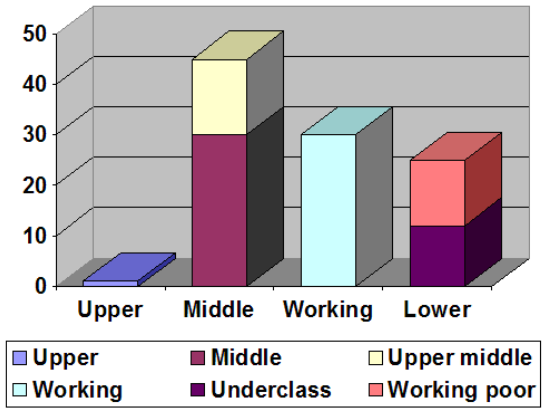
- **Poverty line**: This is the threshold of poverty used by the U.S. Census Bureau to define the minimum income one must earn to meet basic material needs.
- **public assistance**: the various forms of material aid provided by the government to those who are in need
- **underclass**: the poorest class of people in a given society
- **manual labor**: Any work done by hand; usually implying it is unskilled or physically demanding.

Defining the Lower Class

The lower class in the United States refers to individuals who are at, or near, the lower end of the socioeconomic hierarchy. As with all social classes in the United States, the lower class is loosely defined, and its boundaries and definitions are subject to debate. When used by social scientists, the lower class is typically defined as service employees, low-level manual laborers, and the unemployed. Those who are employed in lower class occupations are often colloquially referred to as the working poor. Those who do not participate in the labor force, and who rely on public assistance, such as food stamps and welfare checks, as their main source of income, are commonly identified as members of the underclass, or, colloquially, the poor. Generally, lower class individuals work easily-filled employment positions that have little prestige or economic compensation. These individuals often lack a high school education.

Unemployment and the Poverty Line

A number of things can cause an individual to become unemployed. Two of the most common causes are low educational attainment and disabilities, the latter of which includes both physical and mental ailments that preclude educational or occupational success. The poverty line is defined as the income level at which an individual becomes eligible for public assistance. While only about 12% of households fall below the poverty threshold at one point in time, the total percentage of households that will, at some point during the course of a single year, fall below the poverty line, is much higher. Many such households waver above and below the line throughout a single year. Lower class households are at the greatest risk of falling below this poverty line, particularly if a job holder becomes unemployed. For all of these reasons, lower class households are the most economically vulnerable in the United States.



Gilbert Model: This is a model of the socio-economic stratification of American society, as outlined by Dennis Gilbert.

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9.3G: Income Distribution

The United States has a high level of income inequality, with a wide gap between the top and bottom brackets of earners.

Learning Objectives

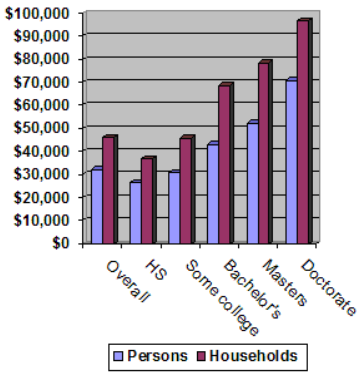
- Explain the development of income distribution in the US since the 1970's and what is meant by the "Great Divergence"

Key Points

- Since the 1970s, inequality has increased dramatically in the United States.
- Different groups get different compensation for the same work. The discrepancy in wages between males and females is called the " gender wage gap," and the discrepancy between whites and minorities is called the "racial wage gap".
- While earnings from capital and investment are still a significant cause of inequality, income is increasingly segregated by occupation as well. Of earners, 60% in the top 0.1% are executives, managers, supervisors, and financial professionals.

Key Terms

- **Race Wage Gap**: The difference in earnings between racial or ethnic groups.
- **Gender Wage Gap**: The difference between male and female earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings.
- **great divergence**: Refers to the growth of economic inequality in America since the 1970s.



Income Distribution by Education: This graph illustrates the unequal distribution of income between groups with different levels of educational attainment. Education is an indicator of class position, meaning that unequal distribution of income by education points to inequality between the classes.

Unequal distribution of income between genders, races, and the population, in general, in the United States has been the frequent subject of study by scholars and institutions. Inequality between male and female workers, called the "gender wage gap," has decreased considerably over the last several decades. During the same time, inequality between black and white Americans, sometimes called the "race wage gap," has stagnated, not improving but not getting worse. Nevertheless, data from a number of sources indicate that overall income inequality in the United States has grown significantly since the late 1970s, widening the gap between the country's rich and poor.

A number of studies by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have found that the distribution of income in the United States has become increasingly unequal since the 1970s. Economist Paul Krugman and journalist Timothy Noah have referred to this trend as the "Great Divergence." Since the 1970s, income inequality has grown almost continuously, with the exceptions being during the economic recessions in 1990-91, 2001, and 2007. The Great Divergence differs in some ways from the pre-Depression era inequality observed in the early 1900s (the last period of great inequality). Before 1937, a larger share of top earners' income came from capital (interest, dividends, income from rent, capital gains). Post-1970, a higher proportion of the income of high-income taxpayers comes predominantly from employment compensation–60% of earners in the top 0.1% are executives, managers, supervisors, and financial professionals, and the five most common professions among the top 1% of earners are managers, physicians, administrators, lawyers, and financial specialists. Still, much of the richest Americans' accumulated wealth is in the form of stocks and real estate.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.4: Social Mobility

Topic hierarchy

9.4A: Social Mobility

9.4B: Growing Gap Between Rich and Poor

9.4C: Open vs. Closed Stratification Systems

9.4D: Types of Social Mobility

9.4E: Social Mobility in the U.S.

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9.4A: Social Mobility

Social mobility is the movement of an individual or group from one social position to another over time.

Learning Objectives

- Assess how different factors facilitate social mobility

Key Points

- A person's ability to move between social positions depends upon their economic, cultural, human, and social capital.
- The attributes needed to move up or down the social hierarchy are particular to each society; some countries value economic gain, for example, while others prioritize religious status.
- Social mobility typically refers to vertical mobility, movement of individuals or groups up or down from one socio-economic level to another, often by changing jobs or marriage.

Key Terms

- **Relative Social Mobility**: A measure of a person's upward or downward movement in the social hierarchy compared to the movement of other members of their inherited social class.
- **meritocratic**: Used to describe a type of society where wealth, income, and social status are assigned through competition.
- **social mobility**: the degree to which, in a given society, an individual's, family's, or group's social status can change throughout the course of their life through a system of social hierarchy or stratification
- **Intergenerational Mobility**: Refers to the phenomenon whereby a child attains higher or lower status than their parents.

Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups in social positions over time. Most commonly, social mobility refers to the change in wealth and social status of individuals or families. However, it may also refer to changes in health status, literacy rate, education, or other variables among groups, such as classes, ethnic groups, or countries.

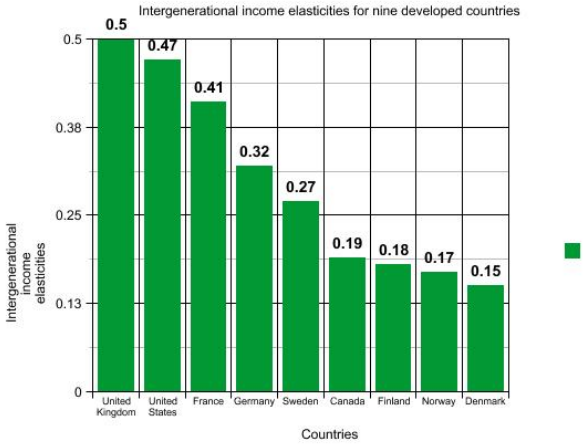
Social mobility typically refers to vertical mobility, movement of individuals or groups up or down from one socio-economic level to another, often by changing jobs or marriage. Nonetheless, social mobility can also refer to horizontal mobility, movement from one position to another within the same social level, as when someone changes between two equally prestigious occupations.

In some cases, social mobility is intergenerational, as when children attain a higher or lower status than their parents held. Other times, social mobility is intra-generational, meaning that a person changes status within their lifetime. A high level of intergenerational mobility is often considered praiseworthy and can be seen as a sign of equality of opportunity in a society.

A distinction can also be drawn between absolute social mobility, which refers to the total observed movement of people between classes, and relative social mobility, which is an estimate of the chance of upward or downward movement of a member of one social class in comparison with a member from another class. An example of absolute social movement is when a region's economic development provides quality education to a social group that previously did not have access to education, thus raising the group's literacy level and socioeconomic status. Relative social mobility might refer to the opportunities presented to a middle class child born in a particular area of the United States, who might be predicted to attain a college level education and a maximum income of $80,000, for example.

Social mobility can be enabled to varying extents by economic capital, cultural capital, human capital, and social capital. Economic capital includes a person's financial and material resources, such as income and accumulated wealth. Cultural capital includes resources ranging from holding a graduate degree to having a grasp of a group's customs and rituals, both of which may confer an advantage in job markets and social exchanges. Human capital refers to such individual traits as competence and work ethic, which may enable increased educational or professional attainment. Social capital includes the advantages conferred by one's social network, such as access to professional opportunities and insider knowledge. These types of capital facilitate mobility by providing access to opportunities and the tools to acquire wealth and status.

Societies present different opportunities for mobility depending on their systems of value. For example, Western capitalist countries are generally meritocratic. In such countries, social standing is based on such personal attributes as educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige. Thus, the degree of mobility in Western capitalist states depends on the extent to which individuals have access to educational and economic opportunity. By contrast, in countries where religious devotion is valued over economic standing, mobility may depend upon individuals' access to religious rituals and shows of piety. In different countries or regions, the extent to which individuals have social mobility depends upon different factors.



Source: Economic Mobility Project, Corak, Miles. 2006. "Do Poor Children Become Poor Adults? Lessons from a Cross Country Comparison of Generational Earnings Mobility." Research on Economic Inequality, 13 no. 1: 143-188.

Intergenerational Mobility in a Sample of Developed Countries: This graph shows the results of a study on how much intergenerational social mobility there is in a sample of developed countries. Countries with higher intergenerational income elasticity have lower social mobility — in countries on the left of the graph, children are likely to attain the same social status as their parents.

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9.4B: Growing Gap Between Rich and Poor

Economic inequality (also known as the gap between rich and poor) consists of disparities in the distribution of wealth and income.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the causes of economic inequality

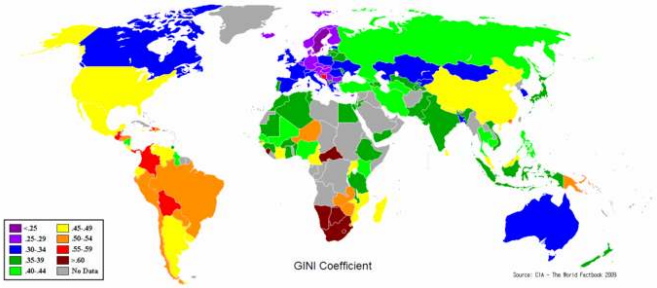
Key Points

- Economic inequality refers to inequality among individuals and groups within a society, but can also refer to inequality among countries.
- Inequality is most often measured using the Gini coefficient, a statistic used to demonstrate the dispersion of wealth in a group.
- Both the capitalist market and government interventions can increase or decrease the level of inequality in a society.

Key Terms

- **supply and demand**: An economic model of price determination in a market based on the relative scarcity or abundance of goods and services.
- **gini coefficient**: A measure of the inequality of a statistical distribution, ranging from zero (total equality) to one (maximal inequality), used in various disciplines but especially in economics to compare incomes or wealth.
- **Capitalist Market**: Refers to an economic system in which supply and demand determines the cost of goods and wages for services.

Economic inequality (also known as the gap between rich and poor, income inequality, wealth disparity, or wealth and income differences) consists of disparities in the distribution of wealth (accumulated assets) and income. The term typically refers to inequality among individuals and groups within a society, but can also refer to inequality among countries. The issue of economic inequality is related to the ideas of equity: equality of outcome and equality of opportunity. There are various numerical indices for measuring economic inequality, but the most commonly used measure for the purposes of comparison is the Gini coefficient (also known as the Gini index or Gini ratio for Italian statistician and sociologist Corrado Gini). The Gini coefficient is a statistical measure of the dispersal of wealth or income. A Gini coefficient of zero indicates that there is perfect equality—assets are equally divided between all people in the group. A Gini coefficient of one indicates that all of a group's wealth is held by one individual. Most countries fall toward the middle of this range.



Map of Global Gini Coefficients: Using Gini coefficients, this map illustrates the extent to which each country in the world has internal inequality, or a gap between its richest and poorest citizens.

There are many reasons for economic inequality within societies, and they are often interrelated. Acknowledged factors that impact economic inequality include, but are not limited to:

- Inequality in wages and salaries;
- The income gap between highly skilled workers and low-skilled or no-skills workers;
- Wealth concentration in the hands of a few individuals or institutions;
- Labor markets;
- Globalization;
- Technological changes;
- Policy reforms;
- Taxes;
- Education;
- Computerization and growing technology;
- Racism;
- Gender;
- Culture;
- Innate ability

A major cause of economic inequality within modern economies is the determination of wages by the capitalist market. In the capitalist market, the wages for jobs are set by supply and demand. If there are many workers willing to do a job for a great amount of time, there is a high supply of labor for that job. If few people need that job done, there is low demand for that type of labor. When there is high supply and low demand for a job, it results in a low wage. Conversely, if there is low supply and high demand (as with particular highly skilled jobs), it will result in a high wage. The gap in wages produces inequality between different types of workers.

Apart from market-driven factors that affect wage inequality, government sponsored initiatives can also increase or decrease inequality. Social scientists and policy makers debate the relative merits and effectiveness of each approach to regulating inequality. Typical government initiatives to reduce economic inequality include:

- Public education: Increasing the supply of skilled labor and reducing income inequality due to education differentials.
- Progressive taxation: The rich are taxed proportionally more than the poor, reducing the amount of income inequality in society.
- Minimum wage legislation: Raising the income of the poorest workers
- Nationalization or subsidization of products: Providing goods and services that everyone needs cheaply or freely (such as food, healthcare, and housing), governments can effectively raise the purchasing power of the poorer members of society.

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9.4C: Open vs. Closed Stratification Systems

In an open class system, people are ranked by achieved status, whereas in a closed class system, people are ranked by ascribed status.

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between open and closed stratification systems

Key Points

- Social stratification describes the socioeconomic levels of a society as "layers," with the wealthiest and most powerful citizens being at the top.
- An achievement-based economic system with social mobility and relations between classes is known as an open class system.
- By contrast, people in a closed class system have been confined to their ancestral occupations, and their social status has mostly been prescribed by birth. Most closed class systems are found in less industrialized countries.
- Ascribed status is the social position one is born into and personal characteristics beyond one's control, such as race and gender. Achieved status is one's social standing that depends on personal accomplishments.

Key Terms

- **achieved status**: A social status of a person that is acquired, such as being an Olympic athlete, being a criminal, or being a college professor.
- **structural mobility**: Opportunity for movement in social class that is attributable to changes in the social structure of a society, rather than to changes in an individual.
- **ascribed status**: The social status of a person that is given from birth or assumed involuntarily later in life.

Social stratification describes the socioeconomic levels of a society as "layers," with the wealthiest and most powerful citizens being at the top. Typically, the top layer of society tends to have lots of property, as well as prestige and social influence.

Sociologists who study stratification have identified open class systems and compared them to closed class systems. The difference between these types of class systems are their structural mobility. In a class system that has high structural mobility, it's easy to move around between social classes based on the way the society is structured, regardless of your individual achievements.

In an open class system, the hierarchical social status of a person is achieved through their effort. These types of class systems are achievement-based economic system with social mobility and relations between classes. Status based on family background, ethnicity, gender, and religion, which is also known as "ascribed status," is less important. In an open class system, there is no distinct line between the classes, and there is a wide range of positions within each status level. Core industrial nations seem to have more of an ideal open class system than less industrialized countries, in which there are fewer opportunities for economic advancement.



Steve Jobs' Childhood Home: The United States exhibits an open stratification system, where individuals can move between social statuses based on achievement. Pictured is the middle class home of Steve Jobs' parents, where he founded the technology company that eventually made him one of the world's wealthiest people.

Compared with industrialized open systems, pre-industrial societies have mostly been found to be closed class systems where there is low social mobility. People in such societies may be confined to their ancestral occupations, and their social status is largely prescribed by status at birth. A society in which traditional or religious caste systems dominate, opportunity for social mobility is unlikely.

Achieved status is a position gained based on merit or achievement (used in an open system). An open system describes a society with mobility between different social classes. Individuals can move up or down in the social rankings; this is unlike closed systems, where individuals are set in one social position for life despite their achievements. Ascribed status is based on who a person is, not what they can do. In closed class systems, people tend to be ranked by ascribed status. When ascribed status is used to determine social position, fixed roles develop, such as those of lord and serf in feudal Europe. Roles are assigned at birth, and there is little change over one's lifetime. Social mobility is much more frequent in countries that use achievement as the basis for status.



The French Estates: This fifteenth-century woodcutting illustrates the closed stratification system of the three estates of the French Ancien Régime. People were divided into clergy, nobility, and commoners. These categories were discrete, and there was little interaction or mobility between them.

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9.4D: Types of Social Mobility

Social mobility can be vertical and horizontal, absolute and relative, and between generations.

Learning Objectives

- Describe several types of social mobility

Key Points

- Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups in social position over time.
- Social mobility may refer to classes, ethnic groups, or entire nations, and may measure health status, literacy, or education; however, more commonly it refers to individuals or families, and to their change in income.
- Movement up or down the social hierarchy is called vertical social mobility.
- Movement between two equally ranked social positions is called horizontal mobility.
- Intra-generational mobility ("within" a generation) is defined as change in social status over a single lifetime.
- Absolute mobility measures whether (and by how much) living standards in a society have increased; this is often measured by what percentage of people have higher incomes than their parents.
- Relative mobility refers to how likely children are to move from their parents' place in the social hierarchy.

Key Terms

- **meritocratic**: Used to describe a type of society where wealth, income, and social status are assigned through competition.
- **vertical mobility**: Movement of individuals or groups up or down from one socioeconomic level to another, often by changing jobs or through marriage.
- **intra-generational mobility**: Change in social status over a single lifetime.

Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups in social position over time. Most commonly, social mobility refers to the change in wealth and social status of individuals or families. However, it may also refer to changes in health status, literacy rate, education, or other variables among groups such as classes, ethnic groups, or countries.

Social mobility typically refers to vertical mobility, which is the movement of individuals or groups up or down from one socioeconomic level to another, often by changing jobs or through marriage. In some instances though, social mobility is used to refer to horizontal mobility, which is the movement from one position to another within the same social level, as when someone changes between two equally prestigious occupations.

Social mobility can be intergenerational, such as when children attain a higher or lower status than their parents held. Other times, social mobility is intra-generational, meaning that a person changes status within their lifetime. A high level of intergenerational mobility is often considered praiseworthy, and can be seen as a sign of equality of opportunity in a society.

A distinction can be drawn between absolute social mobility, which refers to the total observed movement of people between classes, and relative social mobility, which is an estimate of the chance of upward or downward movement of a member of one social class in comparison with a member from another class. An example of absolute social mobility is when a region's economic development provides education to a social group that previously did not have access to education, thus raising the group's literacy level and socioeconomic status. Relative social mobility might refer to the opportunities presented to a middle class child born in a particular area of the United States, who might be predicted to attain a college level education and a maximum income of $80,000, for example.

Social mobility can be enabled to varying extents by economic capital, cultural capital, human capital, and social capital. Economic capital includes a person's financial and material resources, such as income and accumulated wealth. Cultural capital includes resources ranging from holding a graduate degree to having a grasp of a group's customs and rituals, both of which may confer an advantage in job markets and social exchanges. Human capital refers to such individual traits as competence and work ethic, which may enable increased educational or professional attainment. Social capital includes the advantages conferred by one's social network, such as access to professional opportunities and insider knowledge. These types of capital facilitate mobility by providing access to opportunities and the tools to acquire wealth and status.

Each society presents different opportunities for mobility depending on its system of values. For example, Western capitalist countries are generally meritocratic. In these countries, social standing is based on such personal attributes as educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige. Thus, the degree of mobility in Western capitalist states depends on the extent to which individuals have access to educational and economic opportunity. By contrast, in countries where religious devotion is valued over economic standing, mobility may depend upon individuals' access to religious rituals and shows of piety. In different countries or regions, the extent to which individuals are socially mobile depends upon different factors.

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9.4E: Social Mobility in the U.S.

Strong social and economic mobility is considered part of American Dream, though there is relatively low social mobility in the U.S.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how the “glass ceiling” and other factors lower social mobility in the United States

Key Points

- Socioeconomic mobility in the United States refers to the movement of Americans from one social class or economic level to another, often by changing jobs or marrying.
- The ” glass ceiling ” effect is the upper limit on the mobility of minorities, such as African-Americans and women, that prevents them from occupying more than a very small percentage of high status positions.
- For women, another explanation for the glass ceiling effect in the American work force is the job- family trade off.

Key Terms

- **The American Dream**: The belief that with hard work, courage, and determination, anyone can prosper and achieve success.
- **Socioeconomic Mobility**: The movement of Americans from one social class or economic level to another, often by changing jobs or marrying.
- **glass ceiling**: An unwritten, uncodified barrier to further promotion or progression for a member of a specific demographic group.

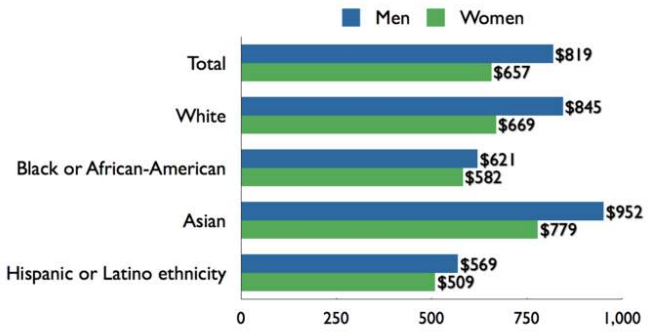
Socioeconomic mobility in the United States refers to the movement of Americans from one social class or economic level to another, often by changing jobs or marrying. This “vertical” mobility can be the change in socioeconomic status between parents and children (“inter-generational”), or over the course of a lifetime (“intra-generational”). It typically refers to “relative mobility”—the chance that an American’s income or status will rise or fall compared to others in another income or status group; however, mobility can also be “absolute”—whether (and by how much) living standards in America have increased. The belief that there is significant social mobility in America, or in other words, that Americans can and do rise from humble origins to riches, is called the American Dream.

Researchers have found that in fact, there is relatively low social mobility in the United States. Explanations for this phenomenon include the following:

- The fact that affluent children have better access to superior schools in an economy where pay is higher for educated workers
- The low rate of unionization, which leads to lower wages among the least skilled workers
- Public health problems, like obesity and diabetes, which can limit education and employment
- The sheer size of the income gap between the rich and poor, which makes it harder to climb the proverbial income ladder because the rungs are far apart
- Poverty, since those with low income have significantly lower rates of mobility than middle and higher income individuals

Despite the increased presence of African Americans and women in the work force over the years, women and non-whites hold jobs with less rank, authority, opportunity for advancement, and pay than men and whites. The limit to women’s and minorities’ upward mobility is called the glass ceiling. The glass ceiling is thought to prevent women and minorities from occupying more than a very small percentage of top managerial positions. One reason for the persistence of the glass ceiling, even as explicitly discriminatory policies are eliminated, is the small proportion of high status individuals in the social networks of women and ethnic minorities. The more managers there are in an employee’s immediate work environment, the higher the employee’s chances of interacting and spending time with high status and high income employees. Consequently, the more likely these employees are to be drawn on for promotion.

For women, another explanation for the glass ceiling effect in the American work force is the job-family trade off. While both men and women feel that a conflict exists between work life and family life, women with children, particularly married women, are more likely to either temporarily leave the labor force or cut back on employment by using flex time, working part-time, or working only part of the year. Statistically, men have been willing to accept job conditions that women do not, such as working outside in extreme weather, working where you can become physically dirty on a regular basis, working extra hours, and other such undesirable conditions.



US Gender Pay Gap, by Race/Ethnicity: In the United States, white males have greater social mobility than women and racial/ethnic minorities, whose mobility is limited by the glass ceiling.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.5: The Impacts of Social Class

Topic hierarchy

9.5A: Consequences of Social Class

9.5B: Physical Health

9.5C: Mental Health

9.5D: Family Life

9.5E: Education

9.5F: Religion

9.5G: Politics

9.5H: Crime and Criminal Justice

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9.5A: Consequences of Social Class

One's position in the the social class hierarchy has far-reaching effects on their health, family life, education, etc.

Learning Objectives

- Describe how socioeconomic status (SES) relates to the distributiuon of social opportunities and resources

Key Points

- While sociologists debate exactly how social classes are divided, there is substantial evidence that socioeconomic status is tied to tangible advantages and outcomes.
- Social class in the United States is a controversial issue, with social scientists disagreeing over models, definitions, and even the basic question of whether or not distinct classes exist.
- Many Americans believe in a simple three-class model that includes the rich or upper class, the middle class, and the poor or working class.

Key Terms

- **hierarchy**: Any group of objects ranked so that everyone but the topmost is subordinate to a specified group above it.
- **socioeconomic**: Of or pertaining to social and economic factors.

In the United States, a person's social class has far-reaching consequences. Social class refers to the the grouping of individuals in a stratified hierarchy based on wealth, income, education, occupation, and social network (though other factors are sometimes considered). One's position in the social class hierarchy may impact, for example, health, family life, education, religious affiliation, political participation, and experience with the criminal justice system.

Social class in the United States is a controversial issue, with social scientists disagreeing over models, definitions, and even the basic question of whether or not distinct classes exist. Many Americans believe in a simple three-class model that includes the rich or upper class, the middle class, and the poor or working class. More complex models that have been proposed by social scientists describe as many as a dozen class levels. Regardless of which model of social classes used, it is clear that socioeconomic status (SES) is tied to particular opportunities and resources. Socioeconomic status refers to a person's position in the social hierarchy and is determined by their income, wealth, occupational prestige, and educational attainment.

While social class may be an amorphous and diffuse concept, with scholars disagreeing over its definition, tangible advantages are associated with high socioeconomic status. People in the highest SES bracket, generally referred to as the upper class, likely have better access to healthcare, marry people of higher social status, attend more prestigious schools, and are more influential in politics than people in the middle class or working class. People in the upper class are members of elite social networks, effectively meaning that they have access to people in powerful positions who have specialized knowledge. These social networks confer benefits ranging from advantages in seeking education and employment to leniency by police and the courts. Sociologists may dispute exactly how to model the distinctions between socioeconomic statuses, but the higher up the class hierarchy one is in America, the better health, educational, and professional outcomes one is likely to have.

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9.5B: Physical Health

Social class is a strong social determinant of health.

Learning Objectives

- Describe how a low socioeconomic status (SES) can impact the health status of individuals

Key Points

- Social class is correlated to environmental hazards that increase one's risk of contracting a disease or sustaining an injury; low access to fresh produce, exercise facilities, and preventative health programs are all environmental hazards that negatively impact health outcomes.
- Health inequality refers to the unequal distribution of environmental hazards and access to health services between demographic groups, including social classes, as well as to the disparate health outcomes experienced by these groups.
- In addition to environmental hazards, lower socioeconomic classes have lower levels of health insurance than the upper class. Much of this disparity can be explained by the tendency for lower status occupations to not provide benefits to employees.

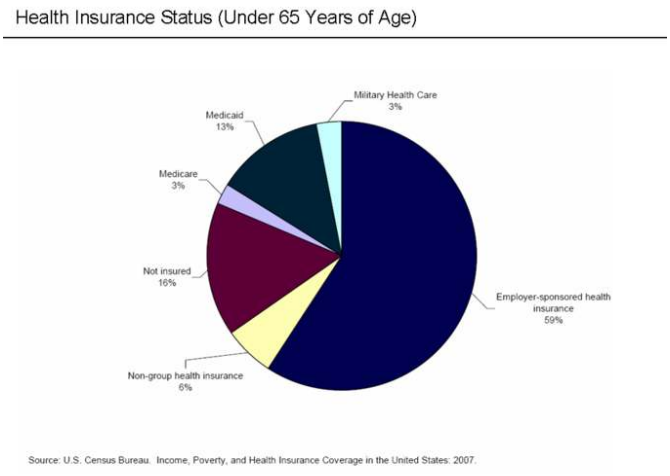
Key Terms

- **Environmental Hazards**: Risk factors related to social and economic conditions that may produce negative health outcomes, including pollution and distribution of grocery stores, for example.
- **health inequality**: The unequal distribution of environmental health hazards and access to health services between demographic groups, including social classes.
- **social determinants of health**: The economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status.

A person's social class has a significant impact on their physical health, their ability to receive adequate medical care and nutrition, and their life expectancy. While gender and race play significant roles in explaining healthcare inequality in the United States, socioeconomic status (SES) is the greatest social determinant of an individual's health outcome. Social determinants of health are the economic and social conditions that influence individual and group differences in health status. Social determinants are environmental, meaning that they are risk factors found in one's living and working conditions (including the distribution of income, wealth, influence, and power), rather than individual factors (such as behavioral risk factors or genetics). Social determinants can be used to predict one's risk of contracting a disease or sustaining an injury, and can also indicate how vulnerable one is to the consequences of a disease or injury. Individuals of lower socioeconomic status have lower levels of overall health, less insurance coverage, and less access to adequate healthcare than those of higher SES.

Individuals with a low SES in the United States experience a wide array of health problems as a result of their economic position. They are unable to use healthcare as often as people of higher status and when they do, it is often of lower quality. Additionally, people with low SES tend to experience a much higher rate of health issues than those of high SES. Many social scientists hypothesize that the higher rate of illness among those with low SES can be attributed to environmental hazards. For example, poorer neighborhoods tend to have fewer grocery stores and more fast food chains than wealthier neighborhoods, increasing nutrition problems and the risk of conditions, such as heart disease. Similarly, poorer neighborhoods tend to have fewer recreational facilities and higher crime rates than wealthier ones, which decreases the feasibility of routine exercise.

In addition to having an increased level of illness, lower socioeconomic classes have lower levels of health insurance than the upper class. Much of this disparity can be explained by the tendency for middle and upper class people to work in professions that provide health insurance benefits to employees, while lower status occupations often do not provide benefits to employees. For many employees who do not have health insurance benefits through their job, the cost of insurance can be prohibitive. Without insurance, or with inadequate insurance, the cost of healthcare can be extremely high. Consequently, many uninsured or poorly insured individuals do not have access to preventative care or quality treatment. This group of people has higher rates of infant mortality, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and disabling physical injuries than are seen among the well insured.



Health Insurance Distribution (under 65 years): As seen in this graph, with insurance needed for most health services, access to healthcare is not evenly distributed among Americans. The largest group of insured Americans consists of middle and upper class employees who receive health insurance through employers. As of 2007, 16% of the population had no health insurance coverage and, thus, had greatly limited access to healthcare.

Health inequality refers to the unequal distribution of environmental health hazards and access to health services between demographic groups, including social classes. For example, poor and affluent urban communities in the United States are geographically close to each other and to hospitals. Still, the affluent communities are more likely to have access to fresh produce, recreational facilities for exercise, preventative healthcare programs, and routine medical visits. Consequently, affluent communities are likely to have better health outcomes than nearby impoverished ones. The role of socioeconomic status in determining access to healthcare results in heath inequality between the upper, middle, and lower or working classes, with the higher classes having more positive health outcomes.



Farmers Market: Farmers markets are visible sources of fresh produce and healthy foods. These markets are concentrated in middle to upper income neighborhoods and are not found in food deserts.

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9.5C: Mental Health

Different classes have different levels of access to treatment and encounter different mental health stressors.

Learning Objectives

- Define mental health and explain why it is regarded as a socially constructed concept

Key Points

- Mental health describes a person's level of psychological well-being, or the presence/absence of mental disorder. Mental health can include one's ability to enjoy life and demonstrate psychological resilience.
- Mental health is socially constructed and defined; it is determined by both scientific and cultural knowledge, and it is understood differently by various groups, institutions, and professions.
- The evaluation of which mental states can be considered healthy and which require medical intervention also varies by class.

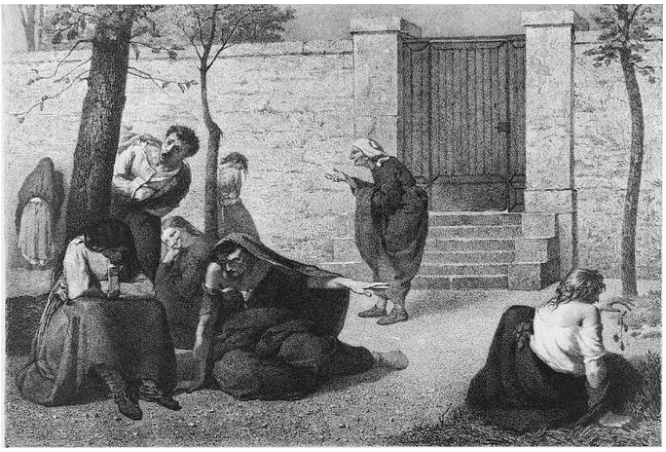
Key Terms

- **mental disorder**: A psychological pattern, potentially reflected in behavior, generally associated with distress or disability, not considered part of normal development in a person's culture.
- **mental health**: Emotional well-being, especially with reference to outlook on life, ability to cope with stress, or the absence of a mental disorder.

Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being or the presence/absence of a mental disorder. From the perspective of "positive psychology" or "holism," mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and to demonstrate psychological resilience when confronted with challenges. The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. "

What counts as healthy enjoyment and resilience depends upon one's class perspective. Members of different classes encounter different stressors—lower class people likely face more financial stress as it pertains to day-to-day sustenance and well-being, while upper class people might experience stress from the intense social pressures associated with elite circles. The evaluation of which mental states can be considered healthy and which require medical intervention also varies by class.

Mental health is a socially constructed and socially defined concept; different societies, groups, cultures, institutions, and professions have very different ways of conceptualizing its nature and causes, determining what is mentally healthy, and deciding what interventions are appropriate. Definitions of mental health depend on cultural understandings in addition to biological and neurological findings. Members of different social classes often hold different views on mental health. Similarly, different social classes have different levels of access to mental health interventions and to information about mental health. Thus, the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders varies widely by social class.



Mental Disorders (1837): To say that mental health is socially constructed means that its definition and criteria can change across time and culture. This lithograph illustrates the eight mental health disorders that were thought to be prominent in England during the early-19th century: dementia, megalomania, acute mania, melancholia, idiocy, hallucination, erotic mania, and paralysis. Since 1837, many of those disorders have been erased from medical textbooks or modified in light of changing social norms.

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9.5D: Family Life

Family life, including marriage, childbearing and household composition are strongly influenced by social class.

Learning Objectives

- Give examples for effects of social class on marriage, birth rates, and family composition

Key Points

- In the United States, the probability of a first marriage ending is substantially higher for couples with low socioeconomic statuses than for those in the middle or upper class.
- Globally, the birth rate in countries with large impoverished populations is much higher than in wealthier countries.
- In nations with high levels of fertility, upper class individuals tend to have more children than their lower class peers, while in nations with low levels of fertility, upper class families exhibit even lower fertility than average.
- Social class has both a cause and an effect relationship with family composition, and lower social class is often correlated with one-parent households.

Key Terms

- **birth rate**: The birth rate is typically the rate of births in a population over time.
- **Family Life**: A general term that refers to marriage and childbearing patterns, household composition and home stability.
- **overpopulation**: A situation which occurs when the number of occupants of an area exceeds the ability of that area to provide for those occupants.

Family life – marriage and childbearing patterns, household composition, and home stability – are strongly influenced by social class. In the United States, the probability of a first marriage ending is substantially higher for couples with low socioeconomic statuses than for those in the middle or upper class. Research shows that the higher rates of divorce for individuals in lower social classes can often be attributed to the greater financial stress these couples face, though factors like class expectations can also play a role.

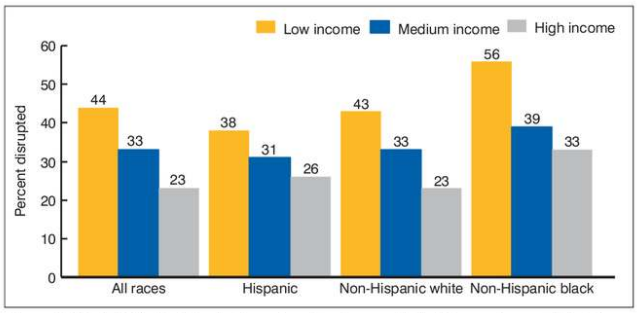


Figure 27. Probability that the first marriage breaks up within 10 years by race/ethnicity and median family income in the community: United States, 1995

Probability of First Marriage Dissolution by Race/Ethnicity and Income (1995): This graph shows that among all races and ethnicities, low income households are more likely to experience divorce than middle and high income households are. Thus, social class bears on rates of marriage dissolution.

Globally, the birth rate in countries with large impoverished populations is much higher than in wealthier countries, indicating that income and wealth play a role in shaping family structures. Demographers have identified a direct relationship between average number of children per household and the economic development of a nation. Today, less developed countries struggle with overpopulation while many governments in developed countries are instituting policies to deal with low birth rates. In nations with high levels of fertility, upper class individuals tend to have more children than their lower class peers. In nations with low levels of fertility, upper class families exhibit even lower fertility than average.

Social class has both a cause and an effect relationship with family composition. For example, single-parent households are likely to have a lower social class because they violate social norms. At the same time, single-parent families can contribute to financial and social instability. A single parent will often face higher costs (in the form of paid childcare), lower earnings (loss of the second parent's income or loss of time spent at work), or both.

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9.5E: Education

Educational attainment is tied to social class, with upper class individuals acquiring higher degrees from more prestigious schools.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss three factors contributing to educational inequality

Key Points

- Those in high social classes are likely to have greater educational attainment than those in low social classes.
- Educational inequality is also perpetuated by legacy admission.
- Because members of high social classes tend to be better educated and have higher incomes, they are more able to provide educational advantages to their children as well.
- Educational inequality is one factor that perpetuates the class divide across generations.

Key Terms

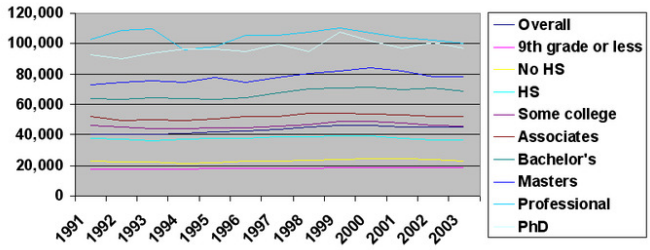
- **educational attainment**: Educational attainment is a term commonly used by statisticians to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed.
- **private school**: A fee-charging private or independent school.
- **legacy student**: A student who is admitted to a school (often a college or university), primarily because one or both of their parents are alumni of the same institution.

Education is a major component of social class, both directly and indirectly. Directly, individuals from higher social classes are more likely to have the means to attend more prestigious schools, and are therefore more likely to receive higher educations. Indirectly, individuals who benefit from such higher education are more likely to land prestigious jobs, and in turn, higher salaries. Just as education and social class are closely intertwined, stratification in education contributes to stratification in social class.

Educational attainment refers to the level of schooling a person completes — for instance, high school, some college, college, or a graduate degree. Upper class individuals are likely to attend schools of higher quality and of greater prestige than those attended by their lower class counterparts. Because members of high social classes tend to be better educated and have higher incomes, they are able to offer greater educational advantages, such as private schooling, to their children as well.

Upper-class parents are better able to send their children not only to exclusive private schools, but also to public state-funded schools. Such schools are likely to be of higher quality in affluent areas than in impoverished ones, since they are funded by property taxes within the school district. Wealthy areas will provide more property taxes as revenue, which leads to higher quality schools. Educational inequality is one factor that perpetuates the class divide across generations.

Such educational inequality is further reinforced by legacy admission, the preference given by educational institutions to applicants who are related to alumni of that institution. Germane to to university and college admissions (particularly in the United States), this practice emerged after World War I, primarily in response to the resulting immigrant influx. Ivy League institutions admit roughly 10% to 30% of students from each incoming class based on this factor.



Educational Attainment and Income (1991-2003): Households with higher educational attainment are likely to have higher incomes than those with low educational attainment — members of the lowest income bracket tend to have no more than a high school education, while the highest income bracket members tend to hold graduate degrees.

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9.5F: Religion

Social class is associated with individuals' religious affiliations and practices but not with religiosity itself.

Learning Objectives

- Explain how social class relates to religious affiliation, denomination and religiosity

Key Points

- Social class is an indicator of religious affiliation, with upper class members concentrated in formal denominations and lower class members concentrated in informal denominations.
- Social class is not an indicator of religiosity; members of each social class practice their faiths with a range of intensities.
- Income, and therefore social class, is related to an individual's denomination. Religion is also strongly linked to level of education.

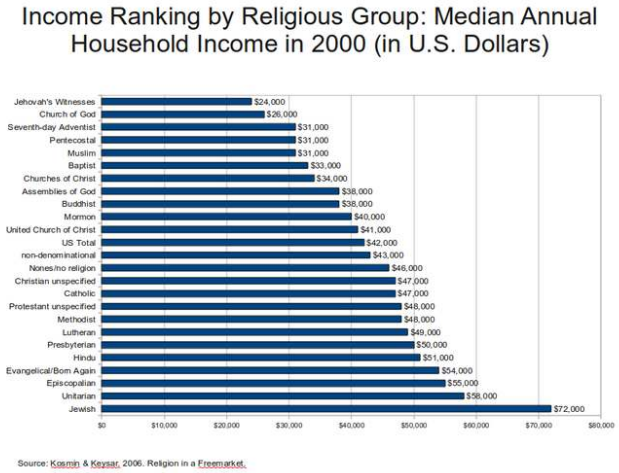
Key Terms

- **Religious Affiliation**: The measure of which religious denomination a person identifies with or practices
- **religiosity**: An index of how strongly religious a person is

Social class, measured by socioeconomic status, is associated with individuals' religious affiliations and practices. This affiliation has more to do with how religion is practiced rather than degree of religiosity. Members of lower classes tend to be affiliated with more fundamentalist religions and sect-like groups. Members of the middle class tend to belong to more formal churches. For example, American Presbyterians and Episcopalians (two highly formal Protestant denominations), tend to have above average socioeconomic statuses. Methodists and Lutherans (two moderately formal Protestant denominations) tend to have about average SES. Baptists and members of Protestant fundamentalist sects (which tend to be decentralized and informal) have below average SES. Variations in SES across denomination reveal a correlation between religious affiliation and social class.

Social class is not significantly correlated to religiosity, an index of how strongly religious a person is. Religiosity is measured by tracking frequency of church attendance, church group involvement, frequency of prayer, and other such markers of strength of religious practice. Members of each social class show a range of religiosity.

On the other hand, income, and therefore social class, is related to an individual's denomination. When one looks at average income by religion, there are clear differences. The highest-earning religion on average is Judaism, with an average income of $72,000 in 2000. This is dramatically higher than average; the next highest-earning denomination is Unitarianism at $56,000. Jehovah's Witness, Church of God, and Seventh Day Adventists are at the bottom of the income distribution, with $24,000, $26,000, and $31,000 respectively.



Religious Affiliation by Median Household Income (2000): Household income, an indicator of social class, can also indicate what religious denomination a person is likely to embrace. America's top income bracket is more likely than other groups to be Jewish, while the lowest bracket is more likely to be Jehovah's Witnesses.

Religion is also linked with education. 72% of Unitarian and 67% of Hindu adherents are college graduates, while only 12% of Jehovah's Witness and 15% of Church of God members graduated from college.

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9.5G: Politics

The higher one's social class, the higher their levels of political participation and political influence.

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate how social class impacts political participation and political influence

Key Points

- Political office holders tend to be of high socioeconomic status, furthering the impact of class on American politics.
- Wealthy, well-educated Americans are more likely to vote and to donate money to politicians than lower class individuals are.
- Those who vote as members of a social class can be said to be participating in identity politics.

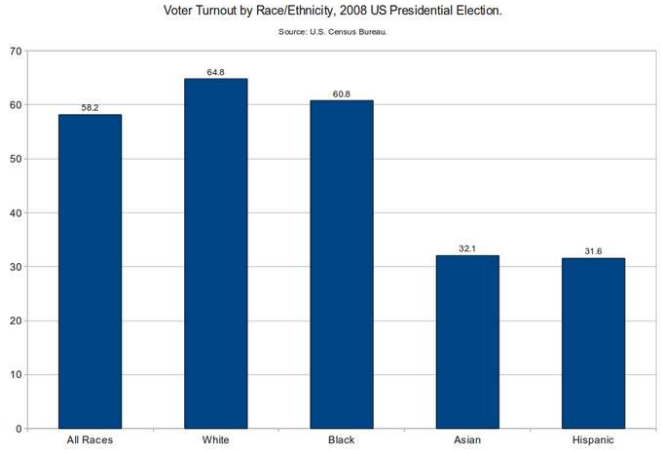
Key Terms

- **Political Influence**: The extent to which one's political participation achieves its desired results, or the amount of power a political actor has to achieve his or her will.
- **Political Participation**: A measure of whether or not a person votes in elections, donates to campaigns, or attends public forums where decisions are made.

Social class impacts one's level of political participation and political influence. Political participation refers to whether or not a person votes in elections, donates to campaigns, or attends public forums where decisions are made, such as town meetings or city council meetings, for example. Political influence refers to the extent to which one's political participation achieves its desired results. For example, if one attends a public forum, is their opinion likely to be heard, or if they donate money, is a politician likely to support their desired policy?

Wealthy, well-educated Americans are more likely to vote and to donate money to politicians than lower class individuals. This trend means that middle and upper class individuals have greater political participation and greater political influence than those in lower positions. Additionally, higher status people are more likely to hold political positions than lower class people. An illustration of this is the presidential election between George W. Bush and John Kerry in 2004. Both had millions of dollars of accumulated wealth, and they had higher degrees from Harvard and Yale, respectively.

Those who vote as members of a social class can be said to be participating in identity politics. Identity politics is a phenomenon that arose first at the radical margins of liberal democratic societies in which human rights are recognized, and the term is not usually used to refer to dissident movements within single-party or authoritarian states. Some groups have combined identity politics and Marxist social class analysis and class consciousness. During the 1980s, the politics of identity became very prominent and was linked with new social movement activism.



Voter Turnout by Educational Attainment –2008 Presidential Election: Educational attainment, an indicator of social class, can predict one's level of political participation. Those with high educational attainment are more likely to vote in elections than those with little education.

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9.5H: Crime and Criminal Justice

Criminal justice is the system of practices and institutions of governments directed at deterring and mitigating crime.

Learning Objectives

- Describe how the administration of punishment has changed throughout history

Key Points

- When a person is suspected of violating a law, they are processed through the criminal justice system.
- The criminal justice system includes law enforcement (such as police or sheriffs), the courts, and corrections authorities (such as prison wardens and social workers).
- Legislation can attempt to refocus and restructure the criminal justice system in the United States, as when the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice issued recommendations to improve the efficacy of criminal justice.
- These reforms reflected a change in the purpose of the criminal justice system. Historically it had been used as a way to deter crime and punish criminals, but now has the added goal of rehabilitating offenders.

Key Terms

- **court**: A tribunal established for the administration of justice, through which legal issues are adjudicated.
- **adjudication**: The process of reaching a judgment or sentence in a legal proceeding.
- **law enforcement**: The various government agencies involved in the prevention of crime and the apprehension of criminals.

Criminal justice is the system of practices and government institutions directed at upholding social control, deterring, and mitigating crime, or sanctioning those who violate laws with criminal penalties and rehabilitation efforts. The American criminal justice system consists of three main parts: (1) enforcement; (2) adjudication; and (3) corrections. These distinct agencies are the principal means of maintaining the rule of law within society.

The first contact an offender has with the criminal justice system is usually with law enforcement, most often the police who investigate a suspected violation and make an arrest. Next, the courts carry out adjudication or the legal processing of offenders. The courts serve as the venue where disputes are settled and justice is administered. Depending on the offense, either a judge or a jury determines whether the suspect violated the law and what their punitive sentence will be. If found guilty by the court, offenders are then turned over to correctional authorities. Correctional authorities may include prison wardens or social workers, depending on the type of offense.

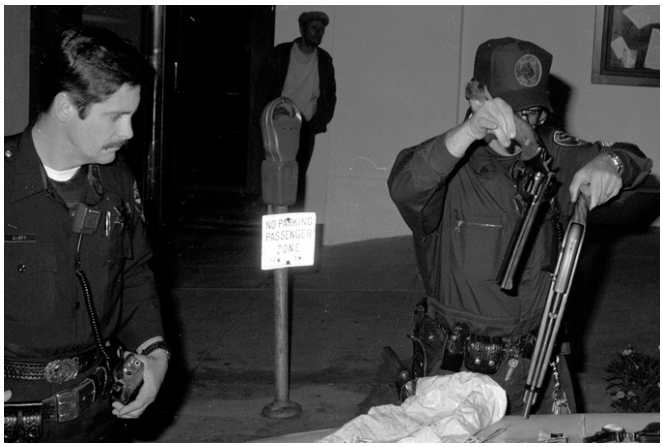


Courtroom: The criminal justice system includes adjudication, wherein the courts legally process suspects to determine their guilt or innocence and sentencing.

Like all other aspects of criminal justice, the administration of punishment has taken many different forms throughout history. Early on, when civilizations lacked the resources necessary to construct and maintain prisons, exile and execution were the primary forms of punishment. Historically shame punishments have also been used as forms of censure.

The most publicly visible form of punishment in the modern era is the prison. Prisons may serve as detention centers for prisoners after trial. Jails are used for containment of the accused before trial. Early prisons were used primarily to sequester criminals and little thought was given to living conditions within their walls. In America, the Quaker movement is commonly credited with establishing the idea that prisons should be used to reform criminals. This can also be seen as a critical moment in the debate regarding the purpose of punishment.

In the United States, criminal justice policy has been guided by the 1967 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, which issued a ground-breaking report titled "The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society. " This report made more than 200 recommendations as part of a comprehensive approach toward crime prevention. Some of those recommendations found their way into the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. The commission advocated a "systems" approach to criminal justice, with improved coordination among law enforcement, courts, and correctional agencies. The commission defined the criminal justice system as the means for society to "enforce the standards of conduct necessary to protect individuals and the community. "



Police Confiscate Gun: Police officers are the most visible members of the law enforcement branch of the criminal justice system, and are charged with maintaining social order by arresting offenders who violate the law.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.6: Poverty

Topic hierarchy

9.6A: Poverty

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9.6C: Explaining Poverty- The Sociological Debate

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9.6F: The Feminization of Poverty

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9.6A: Poverty

Poverty is the condition of not having access to material resources, income, or wealth.

Learning Objectives

- Assess how poverty relates to social mobility

Key Points

- The United States officially defines poverty using the poverty line. The poverty line is set at an income level that is three times the approximate cost of a subsistence level food budget.
- Poverty can also refer to the lack of opportunity to improve one's standard of living (or poor life chances).
- The term " near poverty " refers to earnings that are above the poverty line, but by no more than 25%.
- Social mobility describes a person's flexibility to change their economic status.
- If there is a high level of social mobility, it is relatively easy for people to escape poverty; if social mobility is low, it is very challenging for people to escape poverty.

Key Terms

- **The Poverty Line**: The threshold of poverty, below which one's income does not cover necessities.
- **Near Poverty**: The classification "near poverty" describes a demographic group in the United States that earns 25% above the poverty line.

Poverty describes the state of not having access to material resources, wealth, or income. The United States officially defines poverty using the poverty line. The poverty line is set at an income level that is three times the approximate cost of a subsistence level food budget. This definition has been in use in the United States to track demographic changes and allocate welfare aid since the 1960s.

"Near poverty" is the term for an income level that is just above the poverty line; it refers to incomes that are no more than 25% above the poverty line.

"Relative poverty" refers to economic disadvantage compared to wealthier members of society, whereas " absolute poverty " refers to a family (or an individual) with an income so low that they cannot afford basic necessities of survival, such as food and shelter.

Poverty may correspond not only to lack of resources, but to the lack of opportunity to improve one's standard of living and acquire resources. "Life chances" is a term used to describe someone's access to marketplace resources—essentially, how likely it is in their environment that they might be able to find employment or have a social safety net. Someone who is living in poverty but has high life chances may be able to improve their economic standing, but someone with low life chances will likely have a consistently low standard of living. The term for a person's ability to change their economic status in a society is known as "social mobility. "

If there is a high level of social mobility, it is relatively easy for people to leave poverty. Easy access to higher education and prevalence of well-paying jobs contribute to social mobility. While some factors that contribute to poverty are the result of individual choices, such as dropping out of school or committing a crime, other factors affect poverty that are beyond individual control. In the United States, minorities and women are more likely to be living in poverty.

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9.6B: Measuring Poverty

Poverty is defined by deprivation, and can be measured with economic or social indicators.

Learning Objectives

- Compare the differences between absolute and relative poverty

Key Points

- Economic measures of poverty include access to material needs, typically necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and safe drinking water, measures of income, or measure of wealth.
- Social measures of poverty include access to information, education, health care, or political power.
- Absolute poverty refers to a fixed threshold based on access to income and material resources, while relative inequality is measured using a region's median income and standard of living and therefore reflects income inequality.
- Relative poverty explains poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context. Usually, relative poverty is measured as the percentage of the population with income less than some fixed proportion of median income.

Key Terms

- **World Bank**: A group of five financial organizations whose purpose is economic development and the elimination of poverty.
- **absolute poverty**: A measure of poverty based on a set standard that is consistent over time and between countries, referring to the ability of individuals or groups to meet their basic needs.
- **relative poverty**: A measure of wealth inequality, describing an individual or group's wealth relative to an other individual or group.

Economic measures of poverty focus on material needs, typically including the necessities of daily living such as food, clothing, shelter, or safe drinking water. Poverty in this sense may be understood as a condition in which a person or community is lacking in the basic needs for a minimum standard of well-being, particularly as a result of a persistent lack of income.

Social measures of poverty may include lack of access to information, education, health care, or political power. Poverty may also be understood as an aspect of inequitable social relationships, experienced as social exclusion, dependency, and/or diminished capacity to participate in society.

According to the World Bank, definitions of poverty include low income and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life.

Poverty is usually measured as either absolute or relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a set standard which is consistent over time and between countries. The World Bank uses this definition of poverty to label extreme poverty as living on less than US $1.25 per day, and moderate poverty as less than $2 or $5 a day.

Relative poverty explains poverty as socially defined and dependent on social context. Usually, relative poverty is measured as the percentage of the population with income less than some fixed proportion of median income. Relative poverty measures are used as official poverty rates in several developed countries and are measured according to several different income inequality metrics, including the Gini coefficient and the Theil Index. Measurements are usually based on a person's yearly income and frequently take no account of total wealth.

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9.6C: Explaining Poverty- The Sociological Debate

Sociologists take two opposing approaches to explaining economic stratification: structural-functionalism and conflict theory.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the critiques of structural-functionalist approaches to social stratification

Key Points

- According to structural-functionalists, stratification and inequality are actually constructive phenomena that benefit society —specifically, that the privileges attached to high-status incentive motivated, qualified people to work to achieve those positions.
- According to this logic, inequality ensures that the most functionally important jobs are filled by the best qualified people.
- Conflict theorists argue that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful to society, and that it results in competition between the rich and the poor as individuals act for their own economic advantage.
- Conflict theorists hold that competition and inequality are not inevitable but are created and maintained by people trying to gain access to scarce resources.

Key Terms

- **social stratification**: The hierarchical arrangement of social classes, or castes, within a society.
- **structural-functionalist approach**: A sociological approach to poverty that maintains that all parts of society (even poverty) contribute in some way or another to the larger system's stability.
- **conflict-theory approach**: A sociological theory of poverty that argues that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful to society but persists because it benefits the rich and powerful.

Two classic sociological approaches to poverty and social stratification are structural-functionalism and conflict theory.

The structural-functionalist approach to stratification asks the question: what function or purpose does stratification serve? The theory's answer is that all parts of society, even poverty, contribute in some way or another to the larger system's stability. According to structural-functionalists, stratification and inequality are actually constructive phenomena that benefit society: they ensure that the best people are at the top of the hierarchy and those who are less worthy are at the bottom. Those at the top are given power and rewards because of high abilities, and the high rewards exist to provide incentive for qualified people to do the most important work in high status occupations. According to this logic, inequality ensures that the most functionally important jobs are filled by the best qualified people.

The conflict-theory approach offers a critique of structural-functionalism. First, the critique asserts that it is difficult to determine the functional importance of any job, as a system of interdependence makes every position necessary to the functioning of society. Second, this approach assumes that the system of stratification is fair and rational, and that the 'best' people end up on top because of their superiority. But, according to conflict theorists, in reality the system does not work so easily or perfectly and there are barriers to qualified people ascending the hierarchy.

In contrast to structural-functionalists, conflict theorists argue that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful in society. According to this theory, stratification benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor—those in high-status positions continually build on their wealth, only further entrenching the gap between high-status and low-status people. For example, many wealthy families pay low wages to nannies to care for their children, gardeners to tend to their yards, and maids to clean their homes. Conflict theorists believe that this competitive system, together with structural barriers to upward mobility ends up creating and perpetuating stratification systems. Conflict theorists hold that competition and inequality are not inevitable but are created and maintained by people. Meanwhile, structural-functionalists rebut that people do not always act solely out of economic self-interest.



Surgeons: The job of a surgeon is highly regarded and well compensated but requires years of training, long work hours, and high stress. Structural-functionalists argue that the high status that comes with the job acts as incentive for highly qualified people to pursue it.

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9.6D: Social Exclusion

Social exclusion occurs when individuals and communities are blocked from rights and opportunities that are available to others.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss the causes of social exclusion

Key Points

- Social exclusion is distinct from poverty. Poverty is a distributional outcome, whereas exclusion can be defined as the process of declining participation, solidarity, and access to opportunities.
- Unemployment or lack of transportation can be causes of social exclusion.
- The problem of social exclusion is usually tied to that of equal opportunity, as some people are more subject to such exclusion than others.
- Sociologists see strong links between crime and social exclusion in industrialized societies such as the United States.

Key Terms

- **equal opportunity**: equal opportunity is a stipulation that all people should be given access to opportunities for advancement and treated similarly when competing for jobs, housing, and other resources.
- **Social exclusion**: processes through which individuals and entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities, and resources that are normally available to members of society and that are key to social integration.
- **due process**: a legal concept where a person is ensured all legal rights when deprived of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for a given reason.

Social exclusion is a concept used in many parts of the world to characterize forms of social disadvantage. It refers to processes through which individuals and entire communities of people are systematically blocked from rights, opportunities, and resources that are normally available to members of society and that are key to social integration. These include housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation, and legal due process.

Poverty and exclusion are two different concepts. Poverty is a distributional outcome, whereas exclusion can be defined as process of declining participation, solidarity, and access. It is quite difficult to measure social exclusion quantitatively, as social exclusion is relative, sensitive, and variable.

The causes of social exclusion vary from country to country, but there are general causes that social scientists have identified. In modern industrialized societies, paid work is not only the principal source of income with which to buy goods and services, but is also the fount of individuals' identity and feelings of self-worth. Therefore, unemployment is considered a cause of social exclusion. In some circumstances, lack of transportation can lead to social exclusion. For instance, if lack of access to public transport or a vehicle prevents a person from getting to a job, training course, job center, school, or entertainment venue they may be shut out from opportunities.

The problem of social exclusion is usually tied to that of equal opportunity, as some people are more subject to exclusion than others. Marginalization of certain groups is a problem even in many economically developed countries, including the United Kingdom and the United States, where the majority of the population enjoys considerable economic and social opportunities.

Sociologists see strong links between crime and social exclusion in industrialized societies including the United States. Growing crime rates may reflect the fact that an increasing number of people do not feel valued or included in the societies in which they live. Socially excluded populations may not benefit from the avenues for income and advancement that are open to others, so they resort to illegal means of obtaining resources.



Punk: Punk social groups are often considered marginal and are excluded from certain mainstream social spaces.

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9.6E: The Dynamics of Poverty

Poverty operates in a dynamic cycle, with the effects of poverty increasing the likelihood that it will be transferred between generations.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the cyclical impact of the consequences of poverty

Key Points

- Poor people are less likely than others to have financial capital, education, and social capital (connections to people with specialized knowledge or in powerful positions). Without these resources, poverty -stricken individuals experience disadvantages which in turn increase their poverty.
- The cycle of poverty can trap families in poverty for generations, and often becomes widespread when economies undergo restructuring from manufacturing-based economies to service-based economies.
- Low-quality education, hunger, and homelessness can all perpetuate poverty by creating barriers to individual economic advancement.

Key Terms

- **economic restructuring**: Economic restructuring refers to the phenomenon of shifting between two types of economies, such as from a manufacturing to service economy or agricultural to manufacturing economy.
- **Cycle of poverty**: The idea that poverty operates in a dynamic cycle, with the effects of poverty increasing the likelihood that it will be transferred between generations.

The basic premise of the poverty cycle the idea that poverty is a dynamic process—its effects may also be its causes. In economics, the cycle of poverty has been defined as a phenomenon where poor families become trapped in poverty for at least three generations. These families have either limited or nonexistent social and economic resources. There are many disadvantages that collectively work in a circular process to make it virtually impossible for individuals to break the cycle of poverty. Definitionally, poor people are less likely to have financial capital, education, and social capital (connections to people with specialized knowledge or in powerful positions). Without these resources, poverty-stricken individuals experience disadvantages that, in turn, increase their poverty.

Sociologists have argued that the economic restructuring of the U.S. and other developed nations from manufacturing to service-based economies has led to chronic joblessness in inner cities. In a service economy, there is a higher proportion of high-skill jobs than in a manufacturing economy. Thus, people who have lost their manufacturing positions are unqualified for the jobs available in the new economy. This disparity between available jobs and workforce skill is a driver of cyclical poverty.

Research shows that schools with students who perform worse than the norm are also those hiring the least-qualified teachers, because teachers tend to work in schools in the area where they grew up—teachers who are educated in poor schools come back to teach in the same low quality schools, keeping the schools from improving. Students who attend these low quality schools graduate with little human capital (skills and knowledge), and are thus unqualified for high status occupations. In this way, inadequate or lack of education can perpetuate poverty.

Additionally, those living in poverty suffer disproportionately from hunger, or in extreme cases starvation, and also exhibit disproportionately high rates of disease. These illnesses can be disabling, preventing people in poverty from working in certain occupations or at certain capacities, thus reducing one's opportunities to improve their social and economic status.

Finally, poverty increases the risk of homelessness. Slum-dwellers, who make up a third of the world's urban population, live in poverty no better, if not worse, than rural people, who are the traditional victims of poverty in the developing world. People who are homeless or live in slums have low access to neighborhood resources, high status social contacts, or basic services such as a phone line. This limits their ability to improve their economic position, again perpetuating poverty.



Afghan Girl Begging: A young Afghan girl begging in the street in Kabul, 8 September 2008. Photo by Mikhail Evstafiev



Children in Poverty: Street Child, Srimangal Railway Station, Srimangal, Maulvi Bazar, Bangladesh.

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9.6F: The Feminization of Poverty

The feminization of poverty refers to the fact that women represent a disproportionate share of the world's poor.

Learning Objectives

- Discuss three causes of female poverty

Key Points

- The feminization of poverty is not only a consequence of lack of income, but is also the result of the deprivation of opportunities and gender biases present in both societies and governments.
- Women's increasing share of poverty is related to the rising incidence of lone mother households.
- Women in poverty have reduced access to health care services and resources.
- The education of women and children, especially girls, can create greater opportunities for women to lift themselves out of poverty and increase their social position.
- Women's jobs are more likely than men's to be forms of informal employment, which takes place in small, unregistered enterprises and is not protected by government regulation.

Key Terms

- **informal employment**: Employment that takes place in small, unregistered enterprises without external regulation.
- **formal employment**: Employment that is government regulated, such that workers are insured a wage and certain rights.
- **lone mother households**: Households where a single female acts as the sole head of household; in lone mother households, there is usually no adult male present.
- **feminization of poverty**: a phenomenon in which women represent disproportionate percentages of the world's poor

The feminization of poverty describes a phenomenon in which women represent a disproportionate percentage of the world's poor. This trend is not only a consequence of lack of income, but also of lack of opportunities due to gender biases and fixed gender roles in some societies. Gender biases often deprive women of opportunities to independently pursue education or careers and are often linked to the expectation that women are responsible for childbearing and childrearing. Women's increasing share of poverty is related to the rising incidence of lone mother households.

Many factors place women at higher risk of poverty than their male counterparts. Though low income is the primary cause of female poverty, there are many interrelated sources of this problem. Lack of income deprives women of basic needs, such as food and shelter, and limits their opportunities for advancement. As women disproportionately earn less income than men, they are deprived of basic education and healthcare, which lowers their lifetime earning potential. The responsibilities associated with motherhood further limit women's economic attainment. Lone mother households, or households without a second parent or guardian, are the households with the highest risk of poverty. Female headed households (where no male is present) are most susceptible to poverty because they have fewer income earners to provide financial support within the household. Lone mother households relate to gender inequality issues as women are more susceptible to poverty and lack essential life needs in comparison to men.

Women in poverty also have reduced access to healthcare services and resources. Partly due to the toll of childbearing, women are disproportionately afflicted with poor health outcomes. Poor health reduced women's ability to earn income, and, thus, is a key factor increasing and perpetuating household poverty. Increasing health services to women could, therefore, mitigate the feminization of poverty. The education of women and children, especially girls, can create greater opportunities for women to lift themselves out of poverty and increase their social position. Countries with strong gender discrimination and social hierarchies limit women's access to basic education. Even within the household, girls' education is often sacrificed to allow male siblings to attend school.

Employment opportunities are limited for women worldwide. Women are often barred from materially controlling their environment due to unequal access to profitable and fulfilling occupational opportunities. Employment can be divided into informal and formal occupations. Formal employment is government regulated, and workers are insured a wage and certain rights. Informal employment takes place in small, unregistered enterprises. A large proportion of women are employed in informal workplaces, reducing the regulation of their employment. This makes it more difficult for women to address workplace grievances and ensure safe and legal working conditions.



Microcredit Lending to Women: Microcredit, a system of providing small loans to individuals and families in impoverished areas in an attempt to reverse the cycle of poverty, is almost always distributed to women.

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9.6G: Government Assistance Programs

Federal assistance is defined as any program that directly assists the public in areas, such as education, health, and public welfare.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the organizational structure of federal assistance in the United States

Key Points

- The assistance is provided and administered by federal government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through special programs to recipients.
- Programs administer assistance by “granting” or “awarding” a portion of the assistance to recipients. These are called federal grants or awards.
- Recipients of federal grants include state governments, local governments, territories and possessions, Native American tribal governments, non-profit organizations and institutions, and private individuals.

Key Terms

- **Earmark Grants**: Federal funds that have been designated for specific projects in appropriations of funding for general programs.
- **Formula Grants**: Grants include a specified formula, as a rule, that tells potential recipient governments precisely how they can calculate the quantity of aid to which they are entitled under the provisions of law.
- **single audit**: An annual examination of an aid recipient’s operations and records in order to determine whether or not the recipient complied with laws and regulations applicable to the assistance received.

In the United States, federal assistance is defined as any federal program, project, service, or activity provided by the federal government that directly assists or benefits the American public in the areas of education, health, public safety, public welfare, and public works, among others. The assistance is provided and administered by federal government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through special programs to recipients.



Department of Housing and Urban Development: In the U.S., the Department of Housing and Urban Development administers many government assistance programs, most notably federal public housing.

In order to provide federal assistance in an organized manner, the federal government provides assistance through federal agencies. It is the agency’s responsibility to adequately provide assistance, as well as manage, account, and monitor the responsible use of federal funds which were utilized for that assistance. The agencies then supply the assistance to beneficiaries, such as states, hospitals, poverty-stricken families, etc., through hundreds of individual programs.

Programs administer assistance by “granting” or “awarding” a portion of the assistance to recipients. These are called federal grants or awards. Recipients must first apply for the award directly to the federal agency which administers the program. The agency must then determine the amount of assistance to be awarded and notifies the recipient of the award. Given the enormous size of federal assistance provided, the Federal government has designed different types of grants, each with its own unique way of awarding and operating. These include project grants, formula grants, and earmark grants.

Due to the extensive amount of assistance provided by the federal government, the Federal agencies rely on numerous monitoring activities performed by themselves, pass-through entities, and external sources. The most common monitoring procedure used is the single audit, which is an annual examination of a recipient’s operations and records in order to determine whether or not the recipient complied with laws and regulations applicable to the assistance received.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

9.7: Digital Suppression of Social Movements (in the US)

9.7.1: Mechanisms of Social Movement Suppression

9.7.2: Digital Threats to Social Movements

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9.7.1: Mechanisms of Social Movement Suppression

What You'll Learn

1. How the US suppresses social movements
2. What COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) was and the mechanisms employed to suppress social movements of that era

The US has a long history of interference, including on its own soil in the form of suppressing the efforts of social movements and, in particular, liberatory and leftist social movements. Labor organizing, independence, civil rights, and environmental movements have all been subject to opposition by the US government, often at the behest of or in cooperation with large corporations.

In trying to grapple with the risks associated with a social movement *not* attending to digital security, it is helpful to look at how the State has interfered with social movements in the past. This history can be overwhelming, and it can be tempting to dismiss this as something that has happened in the past but that is not happening now. Going through this history can also lead to defeatism, especially in light of the additional digitally enhanced tools that the State can employ against an adversary (perceived or actual).

However, since we should not condemn ourselves to repeat mistakes of the past, we need to attend to enough history to learn appropriate lessons so that our movements may be successful moving forward. In order to do so without turning this into a history textbook, we draw on the scholarship of Jules Boykoff, who categorized the ways in which the US has messed with social movements in the twentieth century. Boykoff enumerated twelve *modes of suppression*, which we compress to seven in this presentation.

Understanding these historical modes will allow us to predict how digital surveillance could support or enhance those modes, as we will discuss in the chapter "Digital Threats to Social Movements." But more importantly, we will be able to see how encryption and attending to digital hygiene can protect social movements against (some of) these oppositional forces, as we will cover in part 3 of this book.

Modes of Suppression

These are seven ways in which the US has suppressed and continues to suppress social movements, each with a few examples of its use. Unfortunately, these examples are far from exhaustive.

1. Direct Violence

Beatings, bombings, shootings, and other forms of violence are carried out by the State or other institutions or nodes of power against dissident citizens.

This may be the result of the policing of large groups (such as when the Ohio Army National Guard fired at students during an antiwar protest at Kent State University, killing four people and injuring nine others) or targeted assassinations (such as in the FBI-organized night-raid shooting of Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton). To risk an understatement, these actions discourage participation in social movements for fear of life and limb.

2. The Legal System

The legal system allows for harassment arrests, public prosecutions and hearings, and extraordinary laws that are used to interfere with individuals in biased fashions. The State arrests activists for minor charges that are often false and sometimes based on obscure statutes that have remained on the books, buried and dormant but nevertheless providing vessels for selective legal persecution. Public prosecutions and hearings can land dissidents in jail or consume their resources in legal proceedings that sidetrack their activism and demobilize their movements. Current supporters and potential allies are discouraged from putting forth dissident views. Prosecution and hearings publicized in the mass media reverberate outward into the public sphere. Another form of legal suppression, the State promulgates and enforces exceptional laws and rules to tie up activists in the criminal justice labyrinth. This is the legal system being used to squelch dissent.

Controversial stop-and-frisk programs allow police officers to briefly detain and at times search people without probable cause. Free-speech zones greatly limit the time, place, and manner of protests. Those arrested at First Amendment–protected protests on the inauguration of Donald Trump faced public prosecutions that were unlikely to ever reach a conviction. And certain crimes, such as arson or the destruction of property, are elevated to terrorism when they are accompanied by a political motive and allow for the

State to greatly increase the punishment doled out. Other laws are specifically tailored to prevent activism, such as "ag-gag laws," which criminalize the filming of agricultural operations (which is done to expose the abuse of animals).

3. Employment Deprivation

One's political beliefs can result in threats to or actual loss of employment due to one's political beliefs or activities. Some dissidents are not hired in the first place because of their political beliefs. This is typically carried out by employers, though the State can have a powerful direct or indirect influence.

Recently, we have seen university professors forced out of their jobs or have job offers revoked, as with Steven Salaita, whose offer of employment as a professor of American Indian studies was withdrawn following university donors' objections to a series of Tweets critical of Israel and Zionism. For several years (but since struck down by a federal court), government contractors in Texas were required to sign a pledge to not participate in the pro-Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction movement or else they would have their contracts canceled; this resulted in the firing of an American citizen of Palestinian descent who worked as a school speech pathologist and refused to sign the statement.

4. Conspicuous Surveillance

Conspicuous surveillance aims primarily not to collect information (which is best done surreptitiously) but to intimidate. This is intended to result in a *chilling effect*, in which individuals guard their speech and action out of fear of reprisal. It may drive away those engaged in activism or make it difficult to encourage new activists. Although the chilling effect has been deemed unconstitutional, it is difficult to prove harm in a court (as required), so it is a safe means of suppression (from the perspective of the surveiller).

The FBI has a long history of "knock and talks" or simply visiting the houses of dissidents and activists (and those of their families and employers) to "have a chat" in order to let people know that they are being watched.

5. Covert Surveillance

Surveillance might be concentrated or focused, as with the use of spies, targeted wiretaps, and subpoenas or warrants for data; the use of infiltrators (covert agents who become members of the target group); or the use of informants (existing group members who are paid or threatened in order to extract information). Surveillance might also be diffused, such as the accumulation, storage, and analysis of individual and group information that is obtained through internet monitoring, mail openings, and other mass-surveillance techniques.

The scale of the FBI informant program is sizeable, having over fifteen thousand informants in 2008. In the wake of 9/11, the FBI and large law enforcement agencies such as the NYPD turned their intelligence programs against Muslim American communities. This included the close surveillance of lawyers, professors, and the executive director of the largest Muslim civil rights organization in the US (the Council on American-Islamic Relations) by the FBI. The NYPD singled out mosques and Muslim student associations, organizations, and businesses through the use of informants, infiltrators, and surveillance. The NYPD's supposed rationale was to identify potential "terrorists" by looking for "radicalization indicators," including First Amendment–protected activities such as "wearing traditional Islamic clothing [and] growing a beard" and "becoming involved in social activism."

6. Deception

Snitch jacketing is when a person (often an infiltrator) intentionally generates suspicion that an authentic activist is a State informant or otherwise maliciously present in a social movement group. Infiltrators or informants who are in place to encourage violence or illegal activities or tactics (rather than simply report on activities) are known as agent provocateurs and do so in order to legally entrap or discredit the group. False propaganda is the use of fabricated documents that are designed to create schisms or undermine solidarity between activist organizations. These controversial, offending, and sometimes vicious documents are meant to foment dissension within and between groups.

FBI infiltrators have acted as agent provocateurs by leading them down a path to illegal activity that they would not have otherwise followed. Mohamed Mohamud was an Oregon State University student who was contacted by an undercover FBI agent who over a period of five months suggested and provided the means to bomb the lighting of the Portland Christmas tree on November 26, 2010. The bomb was a fake, but Mohamud was sentenced to thirty years of imprisonment.

Eric McDavid spent nearly nine years in prison for conspiring to damage corporate and government property after a paid FBI informant acted as an agent provocateur, encouraging McDavid's group to engage in property destruction and providing them with

bomb-making information, money to buy the raw materials needed, transportation, and a cabin to work in. McDavid's conviction was overturned due to the FBI failing to disclose potentially exculpatory evidence to the defense.

7. Mass Media Influence

There are two major types of mass media manipulation: (1) story implantation, whereby the State makes use of friendly press contacts who publish government-generated articles verbatim or with minor adjustments, and (2) strong-arming, whereby the State intimidates journalists or editors to withhold unwanted information from reaching publication. In addition to that, mass media deprecation portrays dissidents as ridiculous, bizarre, dangerous, or otherwise out of step with mainstream society. This is often not so much due to conspiracy as to dutiful adherence to journalistic norms and values. Mass media underestimation occurs when activists and the State come up with discrepant estimates of crowd sizes for protests, marches, and other activities, with the mass media tending to accept the State's lower numbers. The mass media may also falsely balance dissidents with counterdemonstrators. Many dissident efforts never make it onto the mass media's agenda or are buried in the minor sections of the newspaper. Not only the State but also powerful media organizations or individual owners are able to carry out this type of suppression.

Following the invasion of Iraq after 9/11, antiwar sentiment was consistently downplayed through underreporting. As just one example, the September 2006 antiwar protests that saw more than two hundred thousand people take to the streets across the US was reported by the *Oregonian* in this way: A one-hundred-thousand-strong antiwar protest in Washington, DC, was reported on page 10, along with an article on a Portland protest. The article estimated one hundred people at the protest, even though aerial evidence pointed to over three thousand. A counterdemonstration to the Washington, DC, antiwar protest was covered on page 2 with a larger photo and longer text, even though only four hundred people attended.

Information Technology Interference

This resource would be lacking if we didn't talk about censorship and other interference with information technology. It is an additional mode of suppression with particular relevance to the Information Age that dovetails with deception and mass media influence, wherein access to the internet or related infrastructure is blocked or otherwise denied to social movements—for example, cutting off internet or mobile network access during a protest, censoring certain sites or types of internet traffic, or shutting down a social movement group's website.

Boykoff does not include this in his catalog of suppression, since its use is not widespread within the US by the US largely due to the country's constitutional protections. However, its use is widespread around the globe. Governments have been known to cut off internet access at the country level (such as the week-long total shutdown of the internet in Iran as a means to suppress protests) or limit access to certain sources (such as the Great Firewall of China blocking Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Wikipedia). US companies also participate in this, complying with foreign censorship: Zoom (a web conferencing service) shut down the accounts of three activists at the behest of China, who had planned online events to commemorate the Tiananmen Square massacre.

In Context: COINTELPRO and the COINTELPRO Era

From the 1950s through the 1970s, the FBI conducted a set of secret, domestic counterintelligence activities, which became known as COINTELPRO, under the leadership of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Originating with US government anticommunist programs during the Red Scare, COINTELPRO aimed to "disrupt, by any means necessary," the organizing and activist efforts of the Black Power, Puerto Rican independence, civil rights, and other movements. With respect to civil rights and Black Power movements (including the activities of Martin Luther King Jr.), COINTELPRO was ordered to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black-nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership and supporters to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder."

COINTELPRO was exposed through the theft of boxes full of sensitive FBI paperwork obtained through a burglary in 1971 by the Citizens' Commission to Investigate the FBI, the members of which only went public in the wake of Ed Snowden's disclosures, with remaining COINTELPRO documents coming to light through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. The commission's leak resulted in the formation of the US Senate's Church Committee in 1975, which castigated the FBI for the "domestic intelligence activities [that] have invaded individual privacy and violated the rights of lawful assembly and political expression" and ultimately shut down COINTELPRO. The Church Committee prefaced their admonishment this way:

> *We have seen segments of our Government, in their attitudes and action, adopt tactics unworthy of a democracy, and occasionally reminiscent of totalitarian regimes. We have seen a consistent pattern in which programs*

> *initiated with limited goals, such as preventing criminal violence or identifying foreign spies, were expanded to what witnesses characterized as "vacuum cleaners," sweeping in information about lawful activities of American citizens. The tendency of intelligence activities to expand beyond their initial scope is a theme which runs through every aspect of our investigative findings. Intelligence collection programs naturally generate ever-increasing demands for new data. And once intelligence has been collected, there are strong pressures to use it against the target.*

All the following modes of suppression were used by the FBI or support partners as part of COINTELPRO or against COINTELPRO targets:

1. *Direct violence*

The murder of Fred Hampton mentioned above was a joint operation of the FBI and Chicago Police Department. Fred Hampton was the chairman of the Black Panther Party, a revolutionary socialist political organization of the late 1960s through 1970s that aimed to protect Black Americans and provide social programs (such as free breakfast and health clinics). The Black Panther Party (BPP) was labeled as a "Black nationalist hate group" by the FBI for inclusion as a COINTELPRO target. Hampton's assassination was supported by other modes of suppression, including the following:

- *Covert surveillance*. A paid FBI infiltrator provided intelligence that made the raid leading to Hampton's murder possible.
- *Deception*. The same infiltrator created an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion within the BPP in part by snitch jacketing other members of the BPP.
- *Mass media influence*. Following Hampton's assassination, BPP members were depicted as "folk devils," with media representations becoming increasingly distorted.

2. *The legal system*

Communist and Black Panther Party member and COINTELPRO target Angela Davis was charged with "aggravated kidnapping and first-degree murder" in the death of a judge in California who was kidnapped and killed during a melee with police, even though Davis was not on the scene. California held that the guns used by the kidnappers were owned by Davis and considered "all persons concerned in the commission of a crime, whether they directly commit the act constituting the offense…, principals in any crime so committed." Davis could not be found at the time and was listed by J. Edgar Hoover on the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted Fugitives" list. Months later, Davis was apprehended and spent sixteen months in prison awaiting a trial in which she was found not guilty.

3. *Employment deprivation*

Prior to Davis's battle with the legal system, Davis was fired from her job as a philosophy professor at UCLA for her Communist Party membership in her first year of employment in 1969, called unsuitable to teach in the California system. The firing was at the request of then California governor Ronald Reagan, who pointed to a 1949 law outlawing the hiring of Communists in the University of California. This highlights the lingering Red Scare era or McCarthyism that ran through the 1940s and 1950s. The FBI supported the demonization of communism through a predecessor program to COINTELPRO: COMINFIL (Communist Infiltration) probed and tracked the activities of labor, social justice, and racial equality movements.

4. *Conspicuous surveillance*

Among the first round of FBI documents to come to light about COINTELPRO was a document memo called "New Left Notes." The New Left refers to a broad political movement of the 1960s and 1970s, groups of which campaigned on social issues such as civil, political, women's, gay, and abortion rights. In discussing how to deal with "New Left problems," the FBI Philadelphia field office memo says, "There was a pretty general consensus that more interviews with these subjects and hangers-on are in order for plenty of reasons, chief of which are it will enhance the paranoia endemic in these circles and will further serve to get the point across [that] there is an *FBI Agent behind every mailbox*. In addition, some will be overcome by the overwhelming personalities of the contacting agent and volunteer to tell all—perhaps on a continuing basis."

5. *Covert surveillance*

The Church Committee reported enumerated covert surveillance that "was not only vastly excessive in breadth… but also often conducted by illegal or improper means." Notably, both the CIA and FBI had "mail-opening programs" that indiscriminately opened and photocopied letters mailed in the US on a vast scale: nearly a quarter of a million by the CIA between 1953 and 1973 and another 130,000 by the FBI from 1940 to 1966. Further, both the CIA and the FBI lied about the continuation of these programs to President Nixon.

6. *Deception*

The FBI often sent fake letters or flyers in order to drive wedges between otherwise aligned groups. Below is an example of a cartoon drawn by FBI operatives as a forgery of movement participants and is intended to incite violence between the Black nationalist groups Organization Us (coestablished by Maulana Karenga) and the Black Panther Party (with prominent members Huey Newton, David Hilliard, Bobby Seale, John Huggins, and Bunchy Carter). The cartoon depicts BPP being knocked off by Karenga. The FBI later claimed success in the deaths of two BPP members by US gunmen.

7. *Mass media influence*

Manipulation of the mass media was an explicit tenet of the FBI's COINTELPRO against the New Left. According to the Church Committee, "Much of the Bureau's propaganda efforts involved giving information to 'friendly' media sources who could be relied upon not to reveal the Bureau's interests. The Crime Records Division of the Bureau was responsible for public relations, including all headquarters contacts with the media. In the course of its work (most of which had nothing to do with COINTELPRO), the Division assembled a list of 'friendly' news media sources—those who wrote pro-Bureau stories. Field offices also had 'confidential sources' (unpaid Bureau informants) in the media, and were able to ensure their cooperation."



FBI cartoon to incite violence

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9.7.2: Digital Threats to Social Movements

What You'll Learn

1. What threat modeling is
2. Who is engaged in surveillance and the strategies they use
3. Examples of tactics and programs used in surveillance

Social movements challenging powerful individuals, organizations, and social structures face a broad range of surveillance risks. Specific threats vary widely in technical sophistication, likelihood, and potential for harm. **Threat modeling** is a process whereby an organization or individual considers their range of adversaries, estimates the likelihood of their various data and devices falling victim to attack, and finally considers the damage done if attacks were to succeed. (And then they work to protect the data that is most at risk and that would be the most damaging to lose or have accessed.)

We think about surveillance in the following order to inform how to protect oneself:

- Who is your **adversary**? Is it a neighborhood Nazi who is taking revenge on you for your Black Lives Matter lawn sign? Is it an oil corporation that is fighting your antipipeline activism? Is it the US government trying to prevent you from whistleblowing? By understanding who your adversary is, you can surmise their resources and capabilities.
- Is your adversary going after you in particular, are they trying to discover who you are, or are they collecting a lot of information in the hopes of getting your information? What **surveillance strategy** are they likely to employ? This will help you understand what *type* of data and *where* your data may be at risk.
- What particular **surveillance tactics** will your adversary employ to get that desired data? This will help you understand *how* to protect that data.

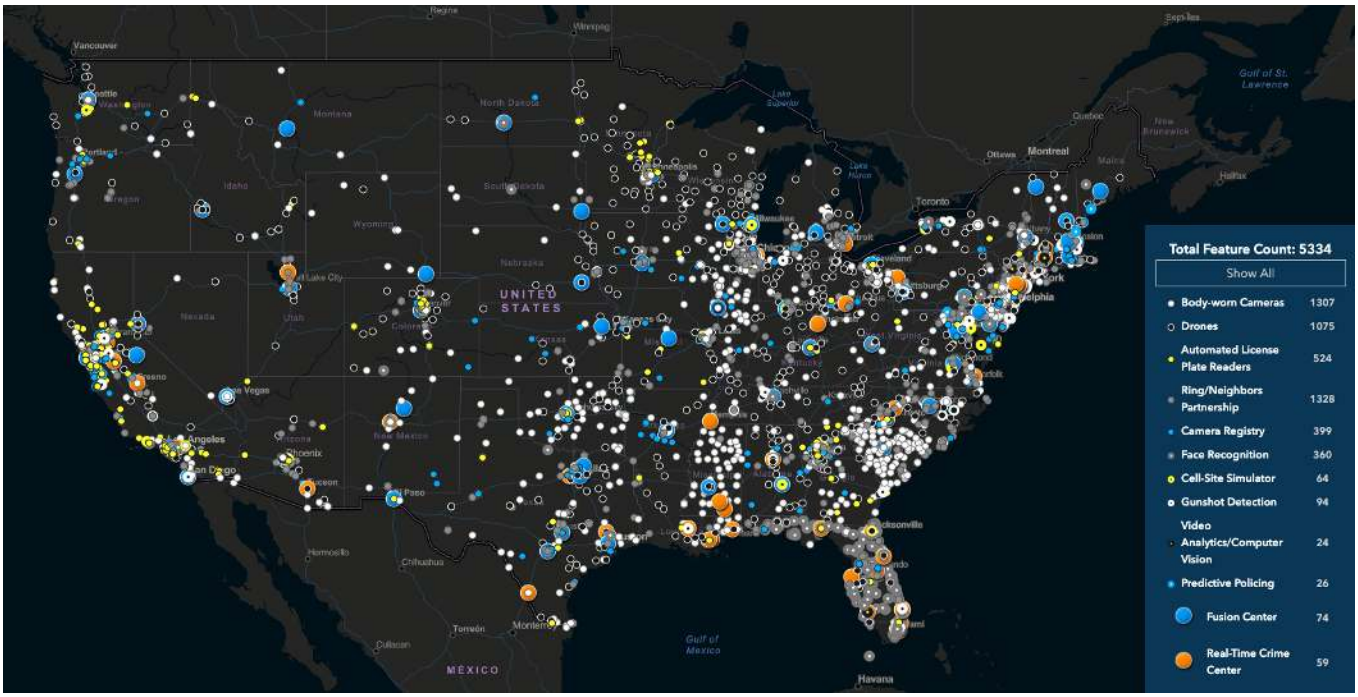
We examine surveillance risks starting with the adversary because it is strategic to do so. No one can achieve perfect digital security, but one can be smart about where to spend one's effort in protecting oneself against surveillance. In an actual threat-modeling discussion within an organization or social movement, *who* potential adversaries are is often more readily apparent than *how* such adversaries would carry out attacks. Who the adversary is then informs the range of techniques available to that adversary (depending on their available resources and legal authorities) and, in turn, what protective behaviors and technologies the organization can employ.

Surveillance Adversaries

We generally think of adversaries in terms of what resources they have available to them. For the purposes of this book, we will limit ourselves to three adversary categories:

Nation-states have access to the most resources in a way that may make it seem like their surveillance capabilities are limitless. Even so, they are unlikely to be able to break strong encryptions. Here, we think of the National Security Agency (NSA) as the entity with access to the most sophisticated surveillance capabilities. The disclosures by Edward Snowden in 2013 give the most comprehensive window into nation-state-level capabilities and are searchable in the Snowden Surveillance Archive.

Large corporations and **local law enforcement** are often heavily resourced and share information with each other but don't necessarily have access to the capabilities of nation-states. However, the use of technology to aid in surveillance is widespread among law enforcement agencies in the US, as illustrated below in this screenshot from Electronic Frontier Foundation's Atlas of Surveillance.



Atlas of police surveillance technologies

Individuals have the least resources but might know you personally and so be able to more effectively use social engineering to obtain your data.

Note that techniques available to lower-resourced adversaries are also available to higher-resourced adversaries. As an example, corporations and law enforcement employ informants and infiltrators, who may be individuals who know you personally. Also, while more sophisticated surveillance capabilities are not usually available to lower-resourced adversaries, it is not always the case: police departments in large cities may have access to nation-state-level resources (e.g., through data sharing that is facilitated by fusion centers), or a particularly skilled neighborhood Nazi may possess advanced hacking skills that enable some corporate-level attacks.

So while these categories are not sharply defined, they can act as a starting point for understanding the risks and focusing on your adversaries' *most likely* strategies and your *most likely* weaknesses.

Surveillance Strategies

There are two broad strategies of surveillance: mass-surveillance and targeted surveillance.

Mass surveillance collects information about whole populations. This can be done with the purpose of trying to better understand that population. For example, the collection and analysis of health-related data can help identify and monitor emerging outbreaks of illnesses. Mass surveillance may also be used as a strategy to identify individuals of interest within the surveilled population. For example, video feeds from security cameras can be used to identify those who engaged in property damage. Or mass surveillance may garner information about a particular individual. For example, information collected from the mass deployment of license-plate cameras can be used to track the movements of that particular individual.

Targeted surveillance only collects information about an individual or a small group of individuals. For example, wiretapping intercepts the communications of a particular individual. Targeted surveillance allows for the existence of prior suspicion and can (conceivably) be controlled—for example, law enforcement obtaining a warrant based on probable cause before intercepting someone's mail.

Historically, there was a clearer divide between targeted and mass surveillance. However, in the digital age, many tactics of targeted surveillance can be deployed on a mass scale, as we will discuss further. In addition to this classic division of surveillance strategies, we draw attention to a bigger strategy that is unique to the digital age.

Collect-it-all may simply be viewed as mass surveillance on steroids but goes far beyond what may have historically been viewed as mass surveillance. Where mass surveillance may encompass things like security cameras, the monitoring of bank transactions,

and the scanning of emails, collect-it-all aims to vacuum up any information that is digitized. Collect-it-all goes further: for any information that isn't online or available (e.g., video from truly closed-circuit security cameras), it digitizes it and then collects it. Collect-it-all is infamously attributed to General Keith Alexander, former director of the NSA, whose mass-surveillance strategies were born in post-9/11 Iraq and were described as follows: "Rather than look for a single needle in the haystack, his approach was, 'Let's collect the whole haystack. Collect it all, tag it, store it… And whatever it is you want, you go searching for it." This is likely the inspiration for many of the NSA programs that were uncovered by Edward Snowden that we highlight below.

Different adversaries tend to deploy different surveillance strategies, or rather, lower-resourced adversaries tend to be limited in their strategies, as depicted:

Adversary (Increasing Resources and Sophistication)	Surveillance Strategies: Targeted	Mass	Collect-it-all
Nation State	X	X	X
Corporation	X	X	
Individual	X		

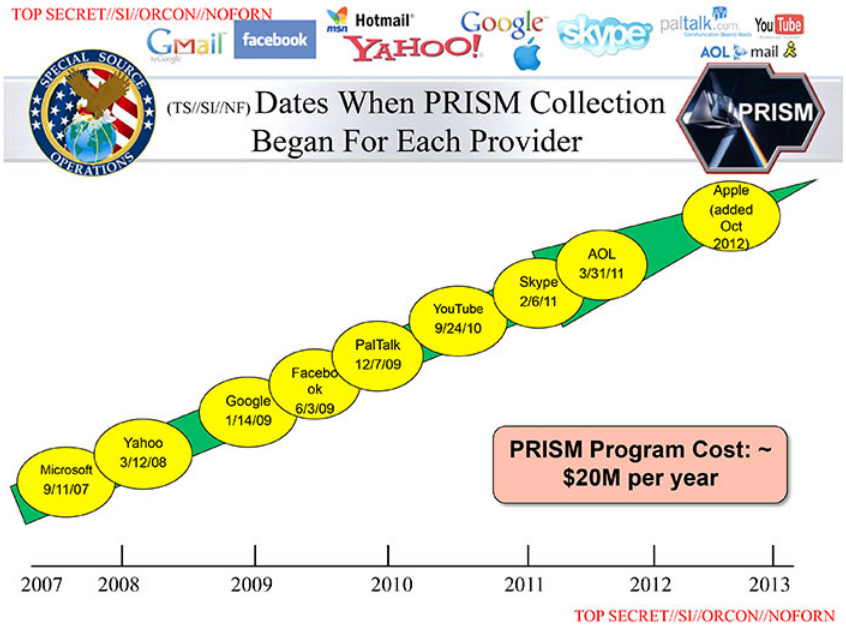
Adversaries and their surveillance strategies

Surveillance Tactics

To go over all the surveillance tactics that are available to adversaries at all levels would fill an encyclopedia. Here we illustrate a few examples of surveillance programs and tactics that support the surveillance strategies above. We illustrate these programs (below) according to the minimum level of sophistication required to use the tactic and the number of people whose information would be collected via these means.

Mass Interception and Collection of Data

We start with what most people probably think of when they think of mass surveillance: the interception and possible recording of vast amounts of communications. Many mass interception programs were uncovered as part of Edward Snowden's disclosures in 2013. **STORMBREW**, **FAIRVIEW**, and **BLARNEY** are three such programs through which the NSA collects data in transit by partnering with telecommunications companies and getting access to data passing through submarine data cables. This allows for the collection of any unencrypted content and all associated metadata while it is in transit from origin to destination. However, these programs cannot see content that is typically encrypted in transit, such as email or files in cloud storage. The **PRISM** program is a partnership of the NSA with various internet companies (such as Google, Microsoft, and Facebook, as illustrated below) to allow NSA access to data held on company servers. That is, if the information was encrypted in transit and so not collectible via STORMBREW, FAIRVIEW, and BLARNEY, then the NSA can get it via PRISM—unless the information is encrypted on the company servers with a key that the user controls.



PRISM Collection, National Security Agency

Aggregating and Analyzing Data

Once you have a whole lot of surveillance data, what do you do with it? Surely the man will not be able to find my tiny little needle in that massive haystack. This is where data mining, from basic search to (creepy) predictive machine-learning models, comes in to make vast amounts of mass-surveillance data (including from disparate sources) useful to powerful adversaries.

The most basic functionality is the ability to search—that is, given a large amount of data, retrieving the data of interest, such as that related to a particular person. **XKEYSCORE** acts as a Google-type search for the NSA's mass-surveillance data stores. While the functionality is basic, the sheer amount of information it has access to (including that from the NSA programs highlighted above) places XKEYSCORE (and any related program) as accessible to only the most powerful adversary.

On the other hand, **Dataminr** searches publicly available data (such as social media posts) to uncover and provide details of emerging crises (such as COVID-19 updates and George Floyd protests) to their customers, which include newsrooms, police departments, and governments, through both automated (software) and manual (human analysis) means. Dataminr and other social media–monitoring platforms, of which there are dozens if not hundreds, have come under fire for their surveillance of First Amendment–protected speech, most notably of the Movement for Black Lives. In several instances, Twitter and Facebook cut off social media–monitoring companies' easy access to their data after public outcry over misuse.

Going further, **Palantir** is one of many policing platforms that supposedly predict where policing is needed, be that a street intersection, a neighborhood, or an individual. In reality, these platforms do little but reinforce racist norms. Predictive policing platforms use current police data as the starting point and tend to send police to locations that police have been in the past. However, communities of color and impoverished neighborhoods are notably overpoliced, so predictive models will simply send police to these areas again, whether or not that is where crimes are being committed.

Going further still, **EMBERS** (Early Model Based Event Recognition Using Surrogates) has been used since 2012 to predict "civil unrest events such as protests, strikes, and 'occupy' events" in "multiple regions of the world" by "detect[ing] ongoing organizational activity and generat[ing] warnings accordingly." The warnings are entirely automatic and can predict "the when of the protest as well as where of the protest (down to a city level granularity)" with 9.76 days of lead time on average. It relies entirely on publicly available data, such as social media posts, news stories, food prices, and currency exchange rates.

Targeted Collection of Data

Another surveillance tactic that comes to mind is that of the wiretap. However, the modern equivalent is a lot easier to enable than the physical wire installed on a communication cable, from which wiretap gets its name. One modern version is the *cell site simulator* (**CSS**), which is a miniature cell tower (small enough to be mounted on a van). To cell phones in the vicinity, this tower provides the best signal strength, and so they will connect to it. At the most basic level, a CSS will uncover the identities of the

phones in the area. (Imagine its use at the location of a protest.) Different CSSes have different capabilities: Some CSSes simply pass on the communications to and from the broader cell network while gaining access to metadata. In some cases, CSSes are able to downgrade service—for example, from 3G to GSM—removing in-transit encryption of cell communications with the service provider and giving access to message content. In other cases, CSSes can block cell communications by having phones connect to it but do not pass information onto the greater cell phone network. CSSes are fairly commonly held by law enforcement agencies (as illustrated in the map at the start of this chapter).

Surveillance equipment, including CSSes and high-resolution video, can also be mounted to surveillance *drones* or *unmanned aerial vehicles* (**UAV**s), which can greatly increase the scope of surveillance from a few city blocks to a whole city. This is one example where tactics of targeted surveillance are expanded toward a mass level. Persistent Surveillance Systems has pitched the use of UAVs to many US police departments. Persistent Surveillance's UAV uses ultrahigh resolution cameras that cover over thirty-two-mile square miles in order to be able to track the movements of individual cars and people, saving a history so that movements can be tracked backward in time.

Of course, often it isn't necessary to surreptitiously collect information. Sometimes you can just ask politely for it. In the US, subpoenas and warrants are used to request information from corporate providers. While warrants require probable cause (in the legal sense), subpoenas do not. As it publishes in its transparency report, Google receives around forty thousand data requests every year, about a third of which are by subpoena. Google returns data for roughly 80 percent of requests, and each request impacts, on average, roughly two user accounts (i.e., each individual request is highly targeted). Of note is that the contents of emails are available by subpoena. While subpoenas and warrants are basic in their nature, they usually can only be accessed by governmental adversaries.

Attacking Devices

The above tactics attempt to collect data while it is in transit or when it is held in the cloud. A final place to collect your data is right from your own device (phone or computer). This might happen if your device is confiscated by the police during a detention or search. We will discuss this more in the chapter "Protecting Your Devices," but we highlight some tactics for extracting device-held data here.

Cellebrite is an Israeli company that specializes in selling tools for extracting data from phones and other devices, such as their *Universal Forensic Extraction Device* (**UFED**), which is small enough to carry in a briefcase and can extract data quickly from almost any phone. However, this requires physical control of your device. NSO Group (another Israeli company) sells the ability to remotely install spyware called **Pegasus** on some iPhones and Androids that will extract text messages, call metadata, and passwords, among other data. The NSA has a family of malware (malicious software) denoted **QUANTUM** that can either gather data or block data from reaching the target device. But the NSA is able to install this malicious software on a mass scale with the use of their **TURBINE** system, which is able to disguise NSA servers as, for example, Facebook servers and use this as a means to injecting malware onto the target's device.

While Pegasus and QUANTUM can be deployed widely, it can be politically dangerous to do so, as these programs are generally met with public outcry. The more widely an invasive surveillance technology is deployed, the more likely it is to be discovered, as was the case with Pegasus.

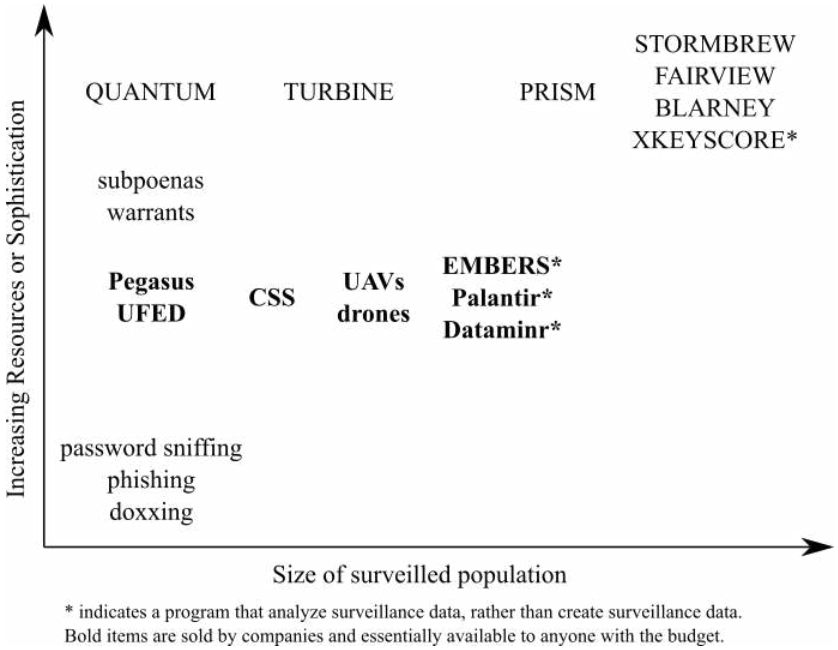
Personalized Harassment

While outside the realm of typical surveillance, personalized harassment should be in mind when considering digital security risks. Doxxing, phishing, and password sniffing are techniques available to the lower-resourced adversary but shouldn't be ignored for that reason. You may wish to revisit the story of Black Lives Matter activist DeRay Mckesson from the chapter "Passwords," who had his Twitter account compromised despite employing two-factor authentication. All his adversary needed was access to some personal information, which may have been discoverable from public sources or through personal knowledge.

Doxxing is the process of publishing (e.g., on a discussion site) a target's personal information that might lead to the harm or embarrassment of the targeted individual. While this is very easy to do, it is also very difficult to protect yourself: once information about you is available online, it is challenging or impossible to remove it.

Phishing describes methods of obtaining personal information, such as a password, through spoofed emails and websites. While phishing can be deployed on a mass scale, the most successful type of phishing (spear phishing) targets individuals by using already known information to improve success rates.

Password sniffing can be as low tech as looking over your shoulder to see you type in a password or can involve installing a keystroke logger to record you typing in your password, but this requires the ability to install a keystroke logger on your device, for which there are methods of varying degrees of sophistication. Traditional password sniffing captures a password as it passes through the network, which can be possible if the traffic is not encrypted, and again requires varying degrees of sophistication but certainly could be deployed by a skilled individual.



Surveillance Tactics

In Context: Standing Rock

In 2016, opponents of the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) set up a protest encampment at the confluence of the Missouri and Cannonball Rivers, under which the proposed oil pipeline was set to be built. The pipeline threatened the quality of the drinking water in the area, which included many Native American communities, including the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Eventually the protest encampment would grow to thousands of people and was in place for ten months.

Energy Transfer Partners, the company building DAPL, employs a private security force, which, a few months into the protest encampment, unleashed attack dogs on the protesters. In addition, Energy Transfer Partners very quickly hired TigerSwan to aid in their suppression of the protest movement. TigerSwan is a private mercenary company that got its start in Afghanistan as a US government contractor during the war on terror. As such, TigerSwan employs military-style counterterrorism tactics and referred to the Native American protesters and others who supported them as insurgents, comparing them (explicitly) to the jihadist fighters against which TigerSwan got its start. TigerSwan's surveillance included social media monitoring, aerial video recording, radio eavesdropping, and the use of infiltrators and informants.

Eventually local, regional, and federal law enforcement would be called in, with TigerSwan providing situation reports to state and local law enforcement and in regular communication with the FBI, the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Justice Department, the US Marshals Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. While many (but not all) of the tactics employed by TigerSwan would be illegal for government law enforcement to adopt, the State is able to skirt this by receiving updates from private companies. This is common practice in many areas in law enforcement, with police departments buying privately held data that would violate the Fourth Amendment if the data was collected directly by the State.

The public-private partnership between state law enforcement agencies, Energy Transfer Partners, and TigerSwan was instrumental in bringing an end to the protest encampment, with the State eventually violently removing protesters through the use of tear gas, concussion grenades, and water cannons (in below-freezing weather), resulting in approximately three hundred injured protestors (including one woman who nearly lost an arm).

While the encampment ended and the pipeline eventually was built, continued opposition eventually led to a court ruling that the pipeline must be shut down and emptied of oil in order to complete a new environmental impact review.

It is important to remember that even though mass surveillance collects information about almost everyone, the harm it causes is differential. Certain groups are surveilled more heavily, or surveillance information about certain groups is used disproportionately. Examples of groups in the US that are disproportionately harmed by State and corporate surveillance are Muslim Americans, Black and African Americans, Native Americans, and social movement participants, as we discussed in the chapter "Mechanisms of Social Movement Suppression."

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SECTION OVERVIEW

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9.8.1: Dominant and Minority Groups

Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

Dominant Group Defined

Minority Studies is a course that deals with the differential and negative treatment of groups (and of individuals as members of groups) who suffer from less wealth, power, (economic, political, social, coercive), and status and less access to wealth, power, and status than other groups in American society. There are racial/ethnic, sex/gender, age, religious, and disabled minorities as well as economic and educational minorities. Furthermore, minority group status may and often does encompass more than one category. Minorities are defined by the dominant group in society and are contrasted to the dominant group in both subtle and obvious ways. A dominant group is positively privileged (Weber) unstigmatized (Rosenblum and Travis)[1] and generally favored by the institutions of society (Marger)[2] particularly the social, economic, political, and educational systems. Classical Sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), recognizes several interlinked relational patterns that lead to stratification; whereas Marxists reduce all inequality to economics (the differences in access to and use of wealth—all of one's financial assets—between the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat), Weber expands stratification into three related yet distinct components: Class, Status, and Party. We may speak of a 'class' when (1) a number of people have in common a specific causal component of their life chances, in so far as, (2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests in the possession of goods and opportunities for income, and (3) is represented under the conditions of the commodity or labor markets.[3]

In other words one's class situation is based solely on economics—one's wealth or access to wealth, or, as Weber writes 'property' and 'lack of property' are therefore, the basic categories of all class situation, [4] however, class does not constitute a community or in Marxian terms a "Class for Self." Weber argues that one's economic position in society does not necessarily or even usually lead to class-consciousness. Status, however, and status groups are often class conscious. Status is related to social esteem, the honor in which one is held by others we wish to designate as 'status situation' every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor . . .Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity.[5]

In other words, status and class quite often, but not always, go hand-in-hand. Weber argues that when there is a stable economy there is greater stratification based on status or social honor, but when there is economic instability, the primary mode of stratification is based on class or wealth. Class and status are two components of stratification, but for Weber, all stratification is based on dimensions of power—the ability to influence over resistance. Class, status, and party, then are three separate dimensions of structures struggling for domination[6].

Moreover, dominant group members have greater access to wealth, power, and status partly because dominant group membership automatically confers privilege. A minority group (and there is some controversy about whether we should even be using the term) is a group that is negatively privileged (Weber), stigmatized (Rosenblum and Travis),[7] and generally less favored by the institutions of society (Marger).[8] A dominant group is an ascribed, (unearned and socially defined), master status which is defined only in relationship to the minority groups in a society. Rosenblum and Travis have argued that

what one notices in the world depends in large part on the statuses one occupies . . . thus we are likely to be fairly unaware of the statuses we occupy that privilege us . . . [and] provide advantage and are acutely aware of those . . . that yield negative judgments and unfair treatment . . . one of the privileges of being white [in America is] being able to be oblivious to those privileges . . .majority status is unmarked or unstigmatized and grants a sense of entitlement . . .the unmarked category . . . tells us what a society takes for granted [such as being white and male in America.][9]

Minority Group Defined

A minority group, which is defined by the dominant group, is also an ascribed master status. It is a category of people whose physical appearance or cultural characteristics are defined as being different from the traits of the dominant group and that result in their being set apart for different and unequal treatment. This definition of a minority group takes into account both race and ethnicity and can, indeed, subsume sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and SES! According to Dworkin and Dworkin there are four qualities of minority groups: 1) identifiability 2) differential power 3) differential and pejorative treatment 4) group awareness.[10] Rosenblum and Travis have written that minority status is highly visible marked stigmatized and unprivileged or differentially (unequally) privileged, what Erving Goffman called tribal stigma.[11] A minority group is not necessarily a minority because they are a smaller population than the dominant group. In fact, the South African system of apartheid (a system of de jure

discrimination) was a major indicator that a minority group is socially and not numerically defined, (90% of the population of South Africa is black but until the very early 1990s they were the minority group and the 10% of the population who are white were the dominant group). The social differences between dominant and minority groups is called stratification, which, in sociological terms is the study of inequality. Stratification is a word that comes to us from geology and describes the layering or strata of rocks; therefore, stratification concerns the ways in which society is layered and how that layering effects the life chances of groups and the individuals within those groups. People in all societies experience some level of stratification—there is no society in the world that is completely egalitarian; even in the most equal societies, men usually have authority over women and the older have authority over the younger.

Stratification

In general, all societies are stratified along one or more lines comprised of race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and SES or socioeconomic status, which is a combination of one's income, education, and occupation. Stratification is the unequal ways in which the goods of society are distributed. Sociologist Craig Oettinger defines stratification as who gets what and how much they get over time. My definition is: the unequal distribution of and unequal access to the goods of society: wealth power and status. According to Abercrombie et. al., social differences become social stratification when people are ranked hierarchically along some dimension of inequality whether this be income wealth power prestige age ethnicity or some other characteristic.[12] Gerhard Lenski argues that stratification is based on distributive systems of who gets what and why? (p. viii) and that social stratification [is equated with] the distributive process in human societies—the process by which scarce resources are distributed (p. xxvi). [13] According to Marger[14], there are four major conditions necessary for ethnic stratification to occur: contact. ethnocentrism, competition, and differential power.

> An example of contact involves the indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America who crossed the Bering Strait during the last great ice age approximately 35,000 years ago. It took these migrants another 12,000 to 15,000 years to populate both continents. Although exact population data is unknown it is believed that the indigenous population was about 75 million in the late 15th century, with somewhere between 1 million and 18 million residing in territories North of the Rio Grande. The Europeans who sailed to the Americas were in search of trade goods and treasure to enrich themselves individually and to bring greater wealth to their nation-states and monarchs. Thus, they arrived as conquerors. The Americas were rich in natural resources that had long since begun to be depleted in Europe and so, the "explorers" set about to establish mercantilistic colonies and to subdue the native populations. The Europeans with their superior weapons, horses, and statecraft overwhelmed the Indians within a few years in South America. Subjugation took longer in North America due to the widely divergent lifestyles of the North American Indians. In South America, the people were an agrarian population largely tied to large urban centers and a highly centralized form of government wherein authority was vested in a small, extremely wealthy, and extremely powerful ruling class. Conquest of people with a form of government and social organization not unlike the city-states and nation-states of Europe was much less problematic overall than the conquest of widely divergent, unorganized, tribal groups of hunter-gatherers who widely scattered across a large geographic area. As Marger[15] makes clear, the Native Americans are the only minority group in the United States whose subjugation and subsequent minority group status was brought about solely through armed conflict and the use of coercive power.
>
> Even after the North American tribes gained the use of horses and guns, they were, ultimately, no match for the superior forces of the United States military and armed mercenaries who hunted to near extinction the primary source of protein—the American bison or buffalo—and who also closed off through various (unkept) treaties many of the hunting and gathering grounds. The ideology called "Manifest Destiny" pushed white traders, treasure hunters, thrill seekers, and settlers further and further across North America until they had encroached on every part of the land, "we heard that creeks of [white people] were flowing into the [Black] Hills and becoming rivers"(*Black Elk*[16] *Speaks*, John Neihardt, Bison Books, U of Nebraska Press, [1932] 1995), p.82).

Ethnocentrism

The ethnocentrism of the Europeans led to an ideology, based primarily on the low-technology hunter-gatherer lifestyle and animistic religion of the Native Americans, that the Native Americans were, as Marger[17] states, inferior, savage humans. This ideology eventually led to "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" philosophy which began with such events as the "Trail of Tears" in the early 1800s and culminated in the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890. The "butchering" at Wounded Knee as Black Elk[18]describes it, marked the last battle between Native Americans and the military forces of the United States. However, there were still skirmishes between farmers and ranchers and Native Americans as late as the 1920s. In fact, the term "Redskin" comes

from a bounty set aside by the United States government for any Indian found outside a reservation without papers. The policy was for Indians "dead or alive" and the bloody, red, skins of the Indians brought as much bounty as a body.

Competition

Competition for land and natural resources and conflict over ownership of land exacerbated the conditions imposed by armed conflict and ethnocentrism. Economic competition always ends in conflict whether armed or peacefully resolved, and when the competing group is a minority—and a despised minority at that—the competition often becomes bloody concluding with the complete subjugation or annihilation of the minority group.

Differential Power

Differential power is always a concomitant of stratification of any kind, as stated previously, the greater force of arms and the increasing white population linked to the susceptibility of the American Indians to disease, the collapse of their social structure, the loss of their hunting and gathering grounds created a state of affairs in which the indigenous peoples were virtually doomed. As Black Elk[19] says:

"and now when I look about me upon my people in despair, I feel like crying and I wish and wish my vision could have been given to a man more worthy. I wonder why it came to me, a pitiful old man who can do nothing. Men and women and children I have cured of sickness with the power [my] vision gave me; but my nation I could not help. If a man or woman or child dies, it does not matter long, for the nation lives on. It was the nation that was dying, and the vision was for the nation . . . the nation's hoop [social structure/social solidarity/integrity as a people] is broken and scattered. There is no center any longer, and the sacred tree [the tree of life that nourishes the nation] is dead. (Black Elk Speaks, p. 180 and 270; italics added for emphasis)"

Master Status

Oftentimes scarce but valued resources (wealth, power, and status) are distributed based on Master Status which includes race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age, religion, disability, and SES (socioeconomic status which is inclusive of the combined effects of income occupation and education). Master Status is a ranking that combines several factors to assess peoples' positions in the stratification hierarchy (levels of social acceptance by the dominant group). Of all the statuses a person occupies it is the one that largely defines who that person is and what his or her goals and opportunities are. All people have Master Status.

For example, I occupy several statuses in society: white, married, female, middle-aged, upper middle class, professor of Sociology and my Master Status, (as is true with most people), is the way in which I define myself to myrself and to others.

Master Status includes those elements of ourselves that we are born with, (ascribed statuses), as well as those we accomplish or attain through our own efforts (achieved statuses). Ascribed statuses include those aspects of ourselves that we are born with and that we do not generally change such as our race/ethnicity, sex, eye color and shape, hair texture, and basic physical appearance (phenotype). Achieved statuses on the other hand are those aspects of ourselves that require us to do something to accomplish such as our adult income, education, and occupation (SES).[20]

One's Master Status or the Master Status one chooses to present is often situationally dependent.

> For instance, my Master Status as a professor of Sociology generally becomes evident only when performing the role of professor of Sociology. My Master Status as a white female, although always evident, is largely ignored unless whiteness or femaleness becomes a particular situational issue.

A social status (any status) is a social position which must be filled. However, any qualified person can fill any social position.

Those of you who are reading this are probably college students—a status which must be filled because it is necessary for people in our culture to be formally educated. Some of you are probably parents—another status that must be filled because it is critical for any culture to add to its population and socialize its young. Some of you are employees who have jobs and go to work everyday—also a necessary status in society because the economy must be supported and maintained and there are basic social services necessary for the smooth operation of an industrialized society.

Each status in society has certain obligations, expectations, duties, rights, and functions that go with them. College students are obligated to pay for their education, expected to do the reading and write the papers that have been assigned, required to come to class and complete the coursework satisfactorily in order to earn a passing grade, study hard, be treated with dignity and respect, and graduate. However, as we all know, some people fail to adequately fill their status.

Social Roles

A social role is the way we fill the various statuses we occupy. You have probably heard someone say that someone else is just taking up space, meaning that they are not doing their job or fulfilling the obligations, expectations, duties, rights, and functions that go with a specific status. They are not playing the role. We have all seen people in school plays who were wrong for a particular part, or who couldn't remember their lines or their position on the stage, or who was simply bad at acting. That person (status=actor) is not playing satisfactorily the part (role=part). All of the various aspects of our Master Status, (the primary social positions we occupy), and sometimes the way we play our social roles, can and do effect our ranking on the stratification hierarchy.

Stratification Redux

Because every society has some level of stratification—even in the least complex hunter-gatherer cultures, men have authority over women and the old have authority over the young—our position in our society is based on our Master Statuses. The stratification hierarchy is the layers or levels of any social structure—it is the way people classify or categorize themselves and others. The American stratification hierarchy is evident to all even though we tend to be relatively oblivious to it.

> For example, the majority of Americans think of themselves as middle class whether they make $25,000 per year or $250,000. Clearly, a vast difference in definitions of middle class is required in order for people with such disparate incomes to include themselves in this largest layer or social category. Even President George H. Bush, who comes from a very wealthy family and is worth several millions of dollars, spoke of himself as middle class during his abortive run for a second term in 1992. The media often referred to former President and Mrs. Bill Clinton as middle class even though they were worth nearly three million dollars in 2000. President George W. Bush and his wife Laura also referred to themselves as middle class and yet they are also worth several million dollars.

Our ability to enjoy such resources as personal autonomy—control of our own lives, health, physical comfort, creature comforts, education, employment opportunities in a high paying and satisfying job, the respect of others, and a long life span are all related to our position in the stratification hierarchy. How we live, where we live, the things with which we surround ourselves, the kind of food we eat, the style and quality of the clothes we wear and the other forms of body adornment we use, the music we listen to, the way we dance, our patterns of speech, virtually everything about us—is determined in greater or lesser extent by our social class, our position on the stratification hierarchy. The way we treat others and the way we classify others is also largely based on our perceptions of where they are located on the stratification hierarchy.

W.I. Thomas and Thomas's Theorem

W. I. Thomas (1863-1947) is justly famous for his work with Florian Znaniecki (1882-1958) concerning the assimilation processes undergone by Polish peasant immigrants to the United States. Indeed they are responsible for our concepts of the social types they defined as "the Philistine, the Bohemian, and the creative man" that informed our social dialogue both in academia and in popular culture in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. However, Thomas is most widely know for what has come to be called Thomas's Theorem which, which, according to Merton states that:

"if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences. . . .Once meaning has been assigned, their consequent behavior is shaped by [that] meaning. If people believe in witches such beliefs have tangible consequences—they may for example kill those persons assumed to be witches. This then is the power the human mind has in transmuting raw sense data into a categorical apparatus that could make murderers of us all. Once a Vietnamese becomes a "gook," or a Black a "nigger," or a Jew a "kike," that human being has been transmuted through the peculiar alchemy of social definition into something wholly other who is now a target of prejudice and discrimination, of violence and aggression, and even murder. [21]"

In other words we act on what we think is real regardless of its ontological reality. Our beliefs, our perceptions, guide our behavior. We treat people based on what we perceive to be their basic (essential) characteristics often based solely on our perception of their place in the stratification hierarchy. Stereotypes and discriminatory behavior are almost always based on such perceptions. Our own position in the stratification hierarchy is judged just as we judge that of others and based on the same generally superficial qualities. What are the first things you notice when you meet someone for the first time? Do the things you notice color your analysis of that person?

It seems to be both a biological as well as social trait that humans place everything in our environment into categories that help us determine what is safe and not safe. Anything that is different is immediately suspect and until we have analyzed the difference and determined whether that difference is or is not harmful we are apt to separate ourselves from that real or perceived danger. Seminal Social-Psychologist Gordon W. Allport wrote:

"No one quite knows why related ideas in our minds tend to cohere and form categories. Since the time of Aristotle, various "laws of association" have been proposed to account for this important property of the mind. The clusters formed do not need to correspond to outer reality as found in nature. For example there are no such things as elves but I have a firm category in my mind concerning them. Similarly, I have firm categories concerning groups of mankind although there is no guarantee that my categories correspond to fact." "To be rational, a category must be built primarily around the essential attributes of all objects that can be correctly included within the category. Thus all houses are structures marked by some degree of habitability (past or present). Each house will also have some nonessential attributes. Some are large, some small, some wooden, brick, cheap or expensive, old or new, painted white or gray. These are not the essential or defining attributes of a house.[22]"

Essential Characteristics

Human beings create mental categories based on our current knowledge of our social and physical world. "We may know full well that there is no such thing as a werewolf, but when we hear a wolf howl while we are camping our minds conjure up certain visions of what may be lurking just beyond our campfire."[23]Thus, we also use these categorical ideas to develop concepts of the essential characteristics of groups of people who differ in some way from ourselves; and yet, determining the essential qualities of any group is highly problematic: "[p]robably in no case can it ever be said that a group difference marks off every single member of a group from every single nonmember. . . . There is probably not a single case where every member of a group has all the characteristics ascribed to his group nor is there a single characteristic that is typical of every single member of one group and of no other group."[24]

What are the essential characteristics of women? Gays, lesbians, and bisexuals? Blacks? Hispanics? Asians? American Indians? The disabled? The elderly? Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists? Or of any minority? What can be said that always applies to each and every member of the group without exception? According to Allport, (based on the J-curve theory of distribution), there are some (not necessarily essential) group traits that are exclusive to a particular group but are rare within that group. In statistical parlance, these are called rare-zero differentials. Unfortunately, we tend to generalize these rare-zero differentials and assume that they are widespread essential group characteristics.[25] All women are _____. All men are _____. All Muslims are _____. All Jews are _____. All blacks are _____. What words did you use to fill in the blanks? Were those words categorical rare-zero stereotypes based on your perception of reality? Are you sure? Why?

Various Sociological, Psychological, and Social-Psychological studies indicate that, based on first impressions of strangers, we think physically attractive people are smart; fat people are sloppy and not very bright; well-dressed people are smarter, richer, and more attractive than people who are less well-dressed; nonwhite males are dangerous and sinister; white people are smarter, richer, more attractive, more honest, and more trustworthy than ethnic or racial minorities (even in the eyes of racial and ethnic minorities). In other words the way we form our initial opinions of the intrinsic human value—the basic human worth—of a stranger is based largely on those external aspects of the person that society has determined are acceptable or not acceptable. We are a class-driven society, but those American core values of equality and independence for all also blind us to the class structure, the social structure, the stratification hierarchy, and the prejudice and discrimination that effects so profoundly and with such grave consequences our day-to-day interactions with our fellow human beings.

Footnotes

- 1 Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.
- 2 Marger Martin. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives: Fourth Edition*. Wadsworth: Belmont CA: 1996.
- 3 *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Edited and translated by Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills. Oxford U.P., New York. 1946/1958. p. 151
- 4 *Ibid.* p. 152.
- 5 *Ibid.* p. 187.
- 6 *Ibid.* p. 185.
- 7 Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition*. Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.
- 8 Marger Martin. *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives: Fourth Edition.* Wadsworth: Belmont CA: 1996.
- 9 Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.

- 10 From Oettinger.
- 11 Rosenblum Karen E. and Toni-Michelle C. Travis. *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race Sex and Gender Social Class and Sexual Orientation: Second Edition.* Boston: McGraw-Hill. 2000.
- 12. 1 Dominant and Minority Groups2 *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*. Nicholas Abercrombie Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner. Penguin: London: 1994: pp. 413-414.
- 13 *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification.* Gerhard Lenski. UNC Press. Chapel Hill. 1984. Italics in original.
- 14 Martin Marger, *Race and Ethnic Relations: American and Global Perspectives: 4th Edition*, Wadsworth, Belmont, 1997. Chapter 5 “Foundations of the American Ethnic Hierarchy: Anglo-Americans and Native Americans, pp. 146-169.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux, As Told through John G. Neihardt*. John G. Neihardt. Bison Books, U. of Nebraska Press, [1932] 1995.
- 17 Marger, *op. cit.*
- 18 *Black Elk, op. cit.*
- 19 *Black Elk, op. cit.*
- 20 Whereas whiteness is the societal norm and therefore without negative connotations people of color (racial and ethnic minorities) do not enjoy the same high level of socioeconomic and normative privilege from their Master Status as do whites. In America, whiteness is the unstigmatized or unmarked category. In other words being white in America is being able to be oblivious to racial and ethnic prejudice and discrimination and to be oblivious to the harm that institutional racism still inflicts.
- 21 *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. Lewis A. Coser. Harcourt. Fort Worth. 1977. p. 521.
- 22 Allport Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition*. Perseus: Reading. 1979. p. 171.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 Allport Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition*. Perseus: Reading. 1979. p. 103; italics in original.
- 25 The J-curve theory states that the essential attributes of a group—these characteristics that define the group—tend to follow a J-curve type of distribution. Furthermore, a J-curve distribution, by definition, includes only group members—no non-group member can be fitted statistically into the distribution. Allport Gordon W. *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition*. Perseus: Reading. 1979. p. 97.

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9.8.2: Minorites by Group

2.2.1 African Americans

A Dream Deferred

“What happens to a dream deferred?” “Does it dry up” “Like a raisin in the sun?” “Or fester like a sore—” “And then run?” “Does it stink like rotten meat?” “Or crust and sugar over—” “Like a syrupy sweet?” “Maybe it just sags ” “like a heavy load” “Or does it explode? ” “Langston Hughes 1944”

The Middle Passage and the Triangle Trade

African Americans have lived on the North American continent for more than 350 years. They were our only completely involuntary immigrants. The Middle Passage was the route of the slave ships (called blackbirds) from Africa to the New World. It was the “middle” portion of the Triangular Trade (1500s-early 1800s) which was the movement of ships and goods from North America to the Caribbean to Africa and back. The Triangle Trade as it has also been called exchanged North American products and raw materials for Caribbean products and raw materials, including tobacco and rum, and then exchanged those for African slaves. Many people died during the Middle Passage from starvation, illness, and even murder. There are some reputable modern scholars who believe that as many as 250 million human beings died during the Middle Passage or were enslaved in the New World between 1500 and 1850 where black human beings were auctioned like cattle. (See Slavery in America: Historical Overview by Ronald L. F. Davis, Ph. D., California State University-Northridge; for a video lecture about the book *Slavery by Another Name* by Doulgas Blackmon, please go to the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition.)

Free Blacks in Early America

However, not all blacks were enslaved in Colonial America. Fort Mose was the first free, all-black settlement in the US. Founded in 1604, it was Located a few miles from St. Augustine, Florida. Nonetheless, most blacks were not so lucky and were enslaved in the millions. In 1805 Toussaint the Liberator, with his revolutionary black soldiers, liberated Haiti and outlawed slavery. Their “inferior” status notwithstanding, African Americans served their country in the Revolutionary War. Crispus Attucks, a runaway slave and merchant seaman, was the first person to die in the Revolutionary War and Agrippa Hull was a free black and Revolutionary War veteran. Some northern religious institutions offered opportunities to African Americans. Absalom Jones was a free black and founder in 1810 of the First Free African Church of Philadelphia which was the first African American church in the United States. Lemuel Haynes was the first African American to be ordained in the United States by the Congregationalist Church in the early 19thcentury.

Pro-Slavery Movement

But the pro-slavery movement had powerful advocates. In 1850 Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act which required citizens to assist in the recovery of fugitive/runaway slaves. Click here for a timeline of the Fugitive Slave Act. The plethora of runaway slave posters attests to anti-black spirit alive in the land. (For some images of these posters see: New York Public Library Digital Gallery; $200 Reward:Runaway slaves and the Underground Railroad in Kansas Territory; Keep a Sharp Eye Out for Kidnappers; Ran away from my farm and $20 Reward; My Mulatto Boy George; Sophia Gordon; $2,500 REWARD.)

John C. Calhoun was a powerful political force in the United States from 1808 until his death in 1850. He was twice Vice-President of the United States (in 1824 under John Quincy Adams and again in 1828 with Andrew Jackson) and had been a senator from South Carolina from 1832-1843 and again from 1845-1850. He was always a staunch defender of plantation system of slavery. In 1837, he delivered a speech “Slavery a Positive Good” in which argued that blacks are better off as slaves in the US than as “savages” in Africa. (See also: John C. Calhoun: A Brief Introduction.)

“Compare [the slave’s] condition with the tenants of the poor houses . . . in Europe—look at the sick, and the old and infirm slave . . . in the midst of his family and friends, under the kind superintending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poorhouse.”

Anti-Slavery Movement and the Civil War

There were also powerful voices raised against slavery. Although unsuccessful, John Adams spent much of his life fighting against slavery; he urged that an anti-slavery clause be inserted into *The Declaration of Independence*. John Quincy Adams, also an abolitionist like his father, was the attorney for the defense in the La Amistad trial.

Frederick Douglass was the writer of one of the most famous "slave narratives" *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*. He was a runaway slave and anti-slavery lecturer in the North. On July 5, 1852 Frederick Douglass gave a famous speech titled "The Meaning of July Fourth to the Negro" which was given at an anti-slavery convention in Rochester, New York.

Blacks and whites banded together in the North to abolish slavery, and in 1845 they held an anti-slavery convention which was attended by Douglass. In December 1859, the fiery abolitionist John Brown executed a raid on the federal arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia in order to steal weapons and arm slaves for a revolt.

Many free and fugitive blacks along with some anti-slavery whites banded together to create the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman was the most famous "conductor" on the Underground Railroad. She made 19 trips into the slave-holding South and freed over 300 people from Southern slavery. (For more information about the Underground Railroad, please visit the following websites: The Underground Railroad; The Underground Railroad from PBS; The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.)

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was largely the result of the clash between slavery and anti-slavery groups. (See American Civil War Summary for a brief view of this conflict.) Free and freed blacks were not allowed to serve in the Union Army until after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, but many served with great distinction in the last years of the war. After the end of the Civil War three new constitutional amendments were ratified: the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865 abolished slavery; the Fourteenth Amendment in July 1868 gave citizenship to former slaves and granted equal protection under the law to all citizens; the Fifteenth Amendment, ratified on February 3, 1870 gave former slave the right to vote. But freedom did not bring equality—segregation laws went into effect as soon as Reconstruction ended. The Jim Crowsegregation laws that were instituted after Reconstruction were named after British actor Charles Matthews who performed in blackface as a character named "Jim Crow." Many African Americans tried to prove to fearful, racist whites that "Negroes" were deserving of social and economic equality; however, their early efforts were largely in vain. Henry Highland Garnet began a failed back-to-Africa movement toward the end of the 19th century. Booker T. Washington was an educator and leader of reform movement in the late 19th and early 20th century. He argued for vocational training as a method of bringing economic prosperity to African Americans. (See also: Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech; *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*; "Cast Down Your Buckets;" "Of Mister Booker T. Washington and Others" from *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois.). Washington's argument was in direct contradiction of the position of William Edward Burghardt (W.E.B.) DuBois who was a founder of the NAACP and a contemporary of Washington's. DuBois argued for academic education to propel blacks into economic prosperity and into equality with whites. W.E.B. DuBois, decrying American racism, renounced his American citizenship when he was 90 and moved to Ghana in West Africa where he died in 1963 at the age of 95. In the 1910s and 1920s Marcus Garvey founded a failed back-to-Africa movement. (For more information about Garvey, please visit the following websites: The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers Project at UCLA;

Marcus Garvey.com; Historic Figures from the BBC.)

Eyes on the Prize—the Civil Rights Movement

The civil disobedience of Rosa Parks led to the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott which lasted for an entire year and generated the first significant change in the Jim Crow segregation laws by desegregating the Montgomery city busses. In 1957, Dr. King and a host of other black leaders in the American South banded together to form the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)which was dedicated to non-violent civil disobedience as practiced by Parks and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Civil Rights movement largely began in the African American churches including Ebenezer Baptist Church where King served as the pastor beginning in 1960.

Freedom riders integrated lunch stands all across the American South but the sit ins began in 1960 with the Greensboro Four.

The Woolworth's Lunch Counter at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.



Figure 1. Photo by Ruth Dunn 2002

"The story of the Greensboro sit-ins " "By JIM SCHLOSSER, News & Record Staff Writer" "Originally published in 1998" "On Feb. 1, 1960, the Greensboro Four, as they would later be called, felt isolated and alone as they sat at that whites-only lunch counter at the Woolworth Store on South Elm Street. " "They were seeking more than what they ordered—sodas, coffee, doughnuts. They were attacking the social order of the time. The unwritten rules of society required black people to stay out of white-owned restaurants, to use only designated drinking fountains and restrooms, to sit in the rear of Greensboro city buses, in a separate balcony at the Center Theatre and in segregated bleachers during sports events at War Memorial Stadium. " "The four black youths—Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair Jr. and David Richmond, all still teenagers and all freshmen on academic scholarships at N.C. A&T State University—had entered the unknown. McCain, who grew up in Washington and spent one year attending Greensboro's Dudley High School, says he expected to be arrested, beaten to a pulp or worse."

In 1963 Dr. King led a march on Washington D.C. where he delivered what is arguably his greatest speech: "I Have A Dream." (For more information about this event, please visit the following websites: MLK Online; Congress of Racial Equality: March on Washington.)

The Declining Significance of Race

As with the end of slavery, the dissolution of the Jim Crow laws and greater equality did not lead to the kind of life that most African Americans envisioned. In many cases, greater equality has led to greater problems. African-American Sociologist William Julius Wilson[1,2] argues that the changing institutions and changing economic structures in the United States have changed race relations to the extent that "the previous barriers [to integration and equality of opportunity] were usually designed to control and restrict the entire black population, the new barriers create hardships essentially for the black underclass; whereas the old barriers were based explicitly on racial motivations derived from intergroup contact, the new barriers have racial significance only in their consequences not in their origins."[3] In other words, the patterns of pathology are a consequence of the new economic structure in which "class subordination is of greater moment than "racial oppression in the economic sphere."[4] Wilson argues, "class has become more important than race in determining black access to privilege and power" which clearly supports the notion that the egregiously low numbers of black business ownership is indicative of lack of power and privilege in the black community.[5]

Wilson, in "The Declining Significance of Race" argues that the United States is in the last of three stages of race relations: "1) preindustrial—the plantation economy and racial-caste oppression; 2) industrial—industrial expansion, class conflict, and racial oppression; 3) modern industrial—progressive transition from racial inequalities to class inequalities."[6] In other words, the United States has moved from direct institutional discrimination wherein skin color was almost completely determinant of a person's life chances to indirect institutional discrimination which, although latent, is more insidious and has racism as a consequence rather than a goal.[7] Wilson's basic argument in this article is that the form of the economy determines the form of the "structural relations between racial and class groups and which thereby produce different patterns of intergroup interaction."[8]

Wilson further argues, that the government must provide leadership and support for affirmative action in order for the economic inroads made by minorities to hold.[9] "The problem for blacks today, in terms of government practices, is no longer one of legalized racial inequality. Rather the problem for blacks especially the black underclass, is that the government is not organized to deal with the new barriers imposed by structural changes in the economy."[10] Government, Wilson argues, seems unable (unwilling?) to intervene among the at-risk lower-class blacks and the black underclass in order to prepare them to compete on a level playing field for those "good," or first tier, jobs that their middle class black brothers and sisters are already accessing.[11] The "illusion that, when the needs of the black middle class were met, so were the needs of the entire black community" is apparently still very much with us even though, "the current problems of lower-class blacks are substantially related to fundamental structural changes in the economy. A history of discrimination and oppression created a huge black underclass, and the technological and economic revolutions have combined to insure it a permanent status."[12] The data on unemployment in the black community, on poverty levels in the black community, and on the dearth of black business ownership support and are supported by Wilson's theory that is the economy that drives inequality not just the color of one's skin.

Harrison and Bennett maintain that residential segregation leads to distrust, fear, and animosity on both sides, planting the seeds of discriminatory and pejorative treatment.[13]

In "The Truly Disadvantaged" Wilson argues that, "unlike the present period [1987], inner-city communities prior to 1960 exhibited the features of social organization—""including a sense of community, positive neighborhood identification, and explicit norms and sanctions against aberrant behavior."[14] Since 1960, Wilson argues, the inner-city has experienced severe social dislocation including: "1) the increase in the number of youth; 2) extreme unemployment; 3) very high school-dropout rates; 4) ""hyperghettoization""[15]"" 5) a severe lack of social organization; 6) poverty; 7) welfare dependency; 8) criminal activity; 9) unemployability."[16]

Wilson discusses two factors , both of which are components of hyperghettoization, which may seen as causative agents in the pathology of the inner-city:

". . . concentration effects and social buffers. The former refers to the constraints and opportunities associated with living in a neighborhood in which the population is overwhelmingly socially disadvantaged—constraints and opportunities that include the kinds of ecological niches that the residents of these communities occupy in terms of access to jobs, availability of marriage partners, and exposure to conventional role models. The latter refers to the presence of a sufficient number of working- and middle-class professional families to absorb the shock or cushion the effect of uneven economic growth and periodic recessions on inner-city neighborhoods. . . . the removal of these families made it more difficult to sustain the basic institutions in the inner city (including churches, stores, schools, recreational facilities, etc.) in the face of prolonged joblessness.[17]"

Wilson further contends that the extreme levels of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and single-mother headed families are a concomitant of that very joblessness. The black "male marriageable pool" has been reduced because "young black women are confronting a shrinking pool of 'marriageable' (that is economically stable) men."[18] It seems quite clear that another factor in the reduction of the black male marriageable pool is the high rate of incarceration of black men. Indeed, it is probable that the incarceration rates are also tightly tied to joblessness.

Wilson maintains that the government must intervene in order to raise the underclass out of its disadvantaged position. Like Tumin,[19] Wilson believes that creaming is inhibited by stratification—the underclass and its potential talent remains hidden from and therefore unused by the wider society.

A Piece of the Pie

Stanley Lieberson's article, "A Piece of the Pie" deals with the different paths taken (available?) to black Americans and white-ethnic immigrants since 1880. His primary thesis is that "the new Europeans have 'made it' to a degree far in excess of that which would have been expected or predicted at the time of their arrival here. It is also equally apparent that blacks have not."[20]Lieberson argues that migrants from different sources will have different opportunities for jobs—emigrants from countries with high standards of living will have relatively higher skill levels and will be able to demand relatively higher wages overall, than their counterparts from countries with lower standards, or black Americans from the rural, low-standard-of-living, post-reconstruction South. Furthermore, Lieberson maintains that Bonacich's split-labor market theory applies as a controlling factor in the kinds of jobs available for new immigrants and Southern blacks. However, Lieberson contends that, because there are "no solid wage data for the groups in ""comparable work which also take into account the cost of living encountered in each [sending] nation and ""South"[21] from the late nineteenth century from which to make comparisons between black Americans and white-ethnic immigrants. Lieberson uses, instead, life expectancy to compare standards of living.[22]

In 1880 the life expectancy for male and female emigrants from South-Central-Eastern Europe (SCE) and for black male and female Americans was 27 and 29, and 22 and 26 years respectively. Lieberson's life expectancy chart clearly shows that, from 1880-1920 the life expectancy of blacks is consistently shorter than that for white-ethnic immigrants. Current life expectancy rates strongly indicate that the consistent pattern shown by Lieberson is not only consistent but is persistent over time. Lieberson explains this persistent pattern by saying, "if the European and black life table values represent differences in levels of living, then there is some reason to expect that the new Europeans might start off in a more favorable position that would blacks in the North even if there was no discrimination."[23] However, Lieberson looks beyond these "intrinsic differences" in order to determine "why more discrimination was directed at blacks as well as why other forces have maintained these gaps.""[24]"" A major reason for racial discrimination against black Americans may simply be, according to Lieberson, that "social events have a life of their own; once established, the customs persist long after causes vanish."[25]

Once again, however, economics is the governing factor in the persistent discrimination against blacks, as Lieberson states, "the racial emphasis resulted from the use of the most obvious feature(s) of the group to support the intergroup conflict generated by a fear of blacks based on their threat as economic competitors."[26] Moreover, as Lieberson compares the economic success and well-being of SCEs and American blacks, Lieberson makes it clear that American blacks' playing field was inherently different and inherently worse.[27] When one's life chances are dictated by the color of one's skin, and when those life chances are greatly lessened by the color of one's skin, social pathologies, as Wilson argues, arise. We must never forget, Lieberson makes clear, that African Americans started out, in America, as involuntary immigrants—as slaves, chattel, property—and this simple fact, coupled with the *de jure* discrimination of Jim Crow and Plessy, must be kept in mind when comparing the economic successes of blacks and whites in America.[28]

"The Tangle of Pathology"

Almost contemporaneously with the Kerner Commission report (1968), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (1927-2003; U. S. Senator from New York 1977-2001) wrote an article that generated a fire-storm of controversy. In that article, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965) and in subsequent literature with co-author Nathan Glazer (*Beyond the Melting Pot*) Moynihan argued that the family structure of the American Negro[29] community was non-mainstream and led to pathological behavior, "the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male . . . it is clearly a disadvantage for a minority group to be operating on one principle, while the great majority of the population, and the one with the most advantages is operating on another."[30]

Moynihan further argues that this structure engenders and perpetuates pathological behavior such as male unemployment, poverty, out-of-wedlock births, single-mother-headed households, and inadequate education. As a precursor to Wilson, Moynihan discusses the effects of hyperghettoization, the illegitimacy rate, the IQ levels of fatherless, poor Negro children, and the great strides made by the Negro middle class. Moreover, he, along with Wilson and Reich states, "it might be estimated that as much as half of the Negro community falls into the middle class, however, the remaining half is in desperate and deteriorating circumstances."[31] In 1993, thirty years after Moynihan's article, the illegitimacy rate of black women was a staggering 68.7%! In fact roughly two-thirds of black children are born outside of marriage, and a minority of black children currently reside in two-parent families.[32] [33]Moynihan also contends that joblessness, inadequate preparation for jobs, and lack of exposure to mainstream work ethics are mechanisms of a pathology that is almost exclusively relegated to poor, inner-city blacks who are more and more separated from white society.[34]

The More Things Change . . .

The more things change, the more they stay the same. The Southern Poverty Law Center has found a 75% increase in the number of hate-based groups and hate-based web sites in the past 5 years.

In 1903 W.E.B. DuBois wrote: "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line." Given the social pathologies entrenched in the African American community, what can be done to solve their problems? Who is responsible for "fixing" the problems of black poverty, drug abuse, criminality, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, male abandonment, single-female heads-of-household, drop-out rates, and lower-than-average college admissions test scores?

Many conservative African Americans argue that white liberal guilt, welfare programs, and social engineering have removed the prize from the grasp of African Americans and have created a society in which freedom is no longer possible. Such conservative apologists include such well known and highly respected academics and social theorists as Stanley Crouch, Thomas Sowell, and Shelby Steele. African American conservatives have argued that it is the responsibility of all blacks to take responsibility for the problems and social pathologies that exist in the black community and to stop making excuses for black poverty, drug abuse, criminality, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, male abandonment, single-female heads-of-household, drop-out rates, and lower-than-average college admissions test scores. Most recently, in 2009, President Barack Obama called on African Americans to be more involved in the lives of their children and to take responsibility for their families.

W.E.B. DuBois made a similar argument 100 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X (later Malcolm al Haj Shabazz), made the same argument 40 years ago, and we are still enmeshed in the same argument today

Perhaps the problem of the 21st century is: Who is right? Who *is* responsible for African American progress in the 21st century. "Eyes on the Prize" of freedom was the theme of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's. What is the prize now? How do we—all Americas—define "the prize" and "keep our eyes on the prize" in 21st century America?

The Black National Anthem

The Black National Anthem (Listen to this song by the Tennessee State University Choir)

By James Weldon Johnson (1900)

"Lift every voice and sing " "Till earth and heaven ring, " "Ring with the harmonies of Liberty; " "Let our rejoicing rise " "High as the listening skies, " "Let it resound loud as the rolling sea. " "Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, " "Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us, " "Facing the rising sun of our new day begun " "Let us march on till victory is won. " "* * * * *" "Stony the road we trod, " "Bitter the chastening rod, " "Felt in the days when hope unborn had died; " "Yet with a steady beat, " "Have not our weary feet " "Come to the place for which our fathers sighed? " "We have come over a way that with tears has been watered, " "We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, " "Out from the gloomy

past, ” “Till now we stand at last ” “Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast. ” “* * * * *” “God of our weary years, ” “God of our silent tears, ” “Thou who has brought us thus far on the way; ” “Thou who has by Thy might ” “Led us into the light, ” “Keep us forever in the path, we pray. ” “Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God, where we met Thee, ” “Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee; ” “Shadowed beneath Thy hand, ” “May we forever stand. ” “True to our GOD, ” “True to our native land. ”

Footnotes

- 1 Wilson, William Julius. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1987. Pp 520-529.
- 2 Wilson, William Julius. The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1980.
- 3 In David B. Grusky, Ed. *Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Genderin Sociological Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 520-529.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 Oettinger, personal communication; 1997.
- 8 In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 520-529.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.* Emphasis added.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Harrison, Roderick J. and Claudette E. Bennett. Racial and Ethnic Diversity.” In State of the Union: America in the 1990s, Volume Two: Social Trends. Reynolds Farley, Ed. New York: Russell Sage, 1995.
- 14 In David B. Grusky, Ed. *Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Genderin Sociological Perspective*. Boulder: Westview Press. 1994.
- 15 . Hyperghettoization is not a word that Wilson uses in either of the articles being reviewed here. The term however, is one that has come to be of some significance in sociological discussions of the inner-city. Basically the term means that “the exodus of black middle-class professionals from the inner-city has been increasingly accompanied by a movement of stable working-class blacks to higher-income neighborhoods in other parts of the city and to the suburbs . . .[leaving] today's ghetto residents [to] represent almost exclusively the most disadvantaged of the urban black community” thereby setting the scene for such pathologies as extremely high percentages of violent criminality, out-of-wedlock births, intractable joblessness, welfare dependency, and lack of job skills.
- 16 In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 520-529.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 22-24.
- 20 In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 541-553.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 *Ibid.* Emphasis added.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 . Even though, in today's culture, it is seen as a sign of ignorance, political incorrectness, or derogation to use the word “Negro” to refer to African Americans, since the word was used by Moynihan this writer uses it in the context of discussing his article.

- 30 In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 555-559.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Hogan and Lichter, In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. P 103.
- 33 Births to Unmarried Women by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age ofMother: 1990 to 2006.
- 34 In David B. Grusky, *Ed. Social Stratification: Class, Race, & Gender in Sociological Perspective.* Boulder: Westview Press, 1994. Pp 555-559.

2.2.2 American Indians

Background in America

American Indians have been on this continent much longer than any other racial or ethnic group. Sometime between 17,000 and 30,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers from Siberia came across the frozen Bering Strait, or across a land bridge formed during the Ice Age, in search of game. Over the millennia, they became the people we call Native Americans or American Indians. They are the indigenous people of the North and South American continents.

Languages and Geographical Location of North American Indians

American Indians speak: English, Spanish, French, and over 150 Native Languages and thousands of dialects. American Indians come from: North America, United States, Mexico, Canada, Central America, South America and may be of any race—black, white, brown.

People are American Indians by virtue of a legal concept developed by Congress called “blood quantum” which means the amount of Native American ancestry that can be proven ($1/8^{th}$). American Indians are the slowest growing racial/ethnic group in the U.S.

“The question of who's really an American Indian, what with the variation in blood quantum requirements from tribe to tribe, is confusing enough, and it's mostly because the Federal government has a long history of meddling, claiming the right to tell Indian people who they are and who they ought to be.” “Blood Quantum is the total percentage of your blood that is tribal native due to bloodline. All of the Nations use Blood Quantum as a requirement for membership. Usually this is detailed on a CDIB (Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood) Card issued by the United States Government. Additionally, many of the Nations have other requirements for Membership.” “As to how it affects you, that is a matter of some debate. Some Native Americans will never recognize you as "Indian" unless you are an enrolled member of a Federally Recognized Tribe, Band, or Nation. Others will recognize you as "Indian" if you are making an honest effort to reconnect with your own ancestral culture.” “Today over three hundred American Indian tribes (excluding Alaskan villages) in the United States are by treaty or executive order recognized by the federal government and receive services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. There are additionally some 125 to 150 groups seeking federal recognition, and dozens of others that might do so in the future.[1]”

How many native peoples were in the Americas when the first white people came is a matter of conjecture.

“The population of North America prior to the first sustained European contact in 1492 CE is a matter of active debate. Various estimates of the pre-contact Native population of the continental U.S. and Canada range from 1.8 to over 12 million. Over the next four centuries, their numbers were reduced to about 237,000 as Natives were almost wiped out. Author Carmen Bernand estimates that the Native population of what is now Mexico was reduced from 30 million to only 3 million over four decades. Peter Montague estimates that Europeans once ruled over 100 million Natives throughout the Americas.” “European extermination of Natives started with Christopher Columbus' arrival in San Salvador in 1492. Native population dropped dramatically over the next few decades. Some were directly murdered by Europeans. Others died indirectly as a result of contact with introduced diseases for which they had no resistance -- mainly smallpox, influenza, and measles. ” “Later European Christian invaders systematically murdered additional Aboriginal people, from the Canadian Arctic to South America. They used warfare, death marches, forced relocation to barren lands, destruction of their main food supply -- the Buffalo -- and poisoning. Some Europeans actually shot at Indians for target practice.[2]”

(For more information about the genocide of the native peoples of the Americas, please see the following websites: The American Indian Genocide Museum; Were American Indians the Victims of Genocide? by Guenter Lewy; American Indian Holocaust.)

Some of the first native people to be identified by archaeologists are the Clovis people; so called because many of their artifacts were originally found near present-day Clovis, New Mexico. According to Time Team America: “The Clovis people were Paleoindians who roamed the Americas around 13,000 years ago. Clovis people are thought to have made their way over the

Bering land bridge, following large game down through the ice-free corridor into the unfrozen lands of North America. Named for a town in New Mexico where the distinctive tools were first found in the 1930s, the Clovis "tool bag" has now been found across the United States."[3]

"The so-called Clovis people, known for their distinctive spearheads, were not the first humans to set foot in the Americas after all, a new study says. The find supports growing archaeological evidence found in recent years that disputes the notion that the Americas were originally populated by a single migration of people from Asia about 13,000 years ago.[4]"

One major archaeological American Indian site is located in Illinois.

According to archaeological finds, the city of Cahokia was inhabited from about A.D. 700 to 1400. At its peak, from A.D. 1050 to 1200, the city covered nearly six square miles and 10,000 to 20,000 people lived here. Over 120 mounds were built over time, and most of the mounds were enlarged several times. Houses were arranged in rows and around open plazas, and vast agricultural fields lay outside the city.

The site is named for the Cahokia subtribe of the Illiniwek (or Illinois tribe, a loose confederacy of related peoples), who moved into the area in the 1600s. They were living nearby when the French arrived about 1699. Sometime in the mid-1800s, local historians suggested the site be called "Cahokia" to honor these later arrivals.

"Archaeological investigations and scientific tests, mostly since the 1920s and especially since the 1960s, have provided what is known of the once-thriving community. [5]"

Like the Clovis people, we know the Cahokia people only from their artifacts; we have no living representatives of these peoples to tell the tales of the North American mound builders.

In the Southwestern United States, in the area of Chaco Canyon, there was a tribal group that the Hopi people and the archaeologists who first excavated the area called the Anasazi.

"The ancestral Puebloan homeland was centered in the Four Corners region of the Colorado Plateau-- southern Utah, northern Arizona, northwest New Mexico, and a lesser section of Colorado-- where their occupation lasted until 1280 or so. By 1300 AD the population centers had shifted south to the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico and the Mogollon Rim in central Arizona, where related people had already been living for centuries. The Spanish who arrived in the 1500s named them the Pueblos, meaning "villagers," as distinct from nomadic people." "Modern Pueblo people dislike the name "Anasazi" which they consider an ethnic slur. This Navajo word means **ancient enemy** (or "old-time" stranger, alien, foreigner, outsider) although it has been in common use for about about 70 years. [6]"

These cliff dwellers lived in "high rise" pueblos from circa 1500 BCE to circa 1300 CE and as with many ancient peoples, we know them from the ruins they left behind.

The Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection at the University of Texas at Austin has a wide variety of historical maps of the United States. For the purposes of this discussion, the following maps are of particular interest because they show the location/territory of the early Indian tribes in the US. Early Inhabitants (From The National Atlas of the United States of America (Arch C. Gerlach, editor). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Geological Survey, 1970). Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas, and Linguistic Stocks - Eastern U.S. (632K). Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas, and Linguistic Stocks - Western U.S. (639K). Early Indian Tribes, Culture Areas, and Linguistic Stocks - Alaska (942K) Exploration and Settlement (Except as noted, from The National Atlas of the United States of America (Arch C. Gerlach, editor). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Geological Survey, 1970). Exploration and Settlement Before 1675 (1.13MB). The Coronado Expedition 1540-1542 (135K) U.S. National Park Service, 1974.

Exploration and Settlement 1675-1800 (1.17MB). Exploration and Settlement 1800-1820 (1.11MB). Westward Expansion and Exploration 1803-1807 From American Military History, United States Army Center of Military History, 1989 (194K). Lewis and Clark Expedition 1804-1806 "Lewis and Clark Expedition Historical Map" [poster] National Imagery and Mapping Agency, ca. 2003. Facsimile of "Lewis and Clark's Track Across the Western Portion of North America from the Mississippi to the Pacific Ocean: by order of the executive of the United States in 1804, 5 & 6, copied by Samuel Lewis from the original drawing of Wm. Clark; Saml. Harrison, fct." 1814 (2.1MB).

The Library of Congress houses amazing collections of just about anything imaginable including many photographs. Edward S. Curtis's The North American Indian: Photographic Images is replete with photographs of native people from the early 20th century. The National Congress of American Indians lists 580 different tribal groups designated by the US government. On their website Native Languages of the Americas: List of Native American Indian Tribes and Languages there is an Alphabetical master list of

American Indian tribes and languages and a Chart of Native American tribal names in their original language and their current version among other interesting features. The American Indian Resource Directory also has lists of tribal groups.

Indians Today

Concerning modern American Indians, Gary D. Sandefur, a professor of social work and sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an affiliate of the Institute for Research on Poverty writes:

"How American Indians came to be concentrated on reservations is a complicated story that most Americans know only very little about from their courses in American history in high school and college. The isolation and concentration of American Indians began very early, but it received its first legal justification in the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Subsequent to the passage of this legislation, most of the Indians who were located east of the Mississippi were relocated to areas west of the river. This relocation included groups such as the Seneca, who were forced to leave the state of New York and eventually ended up in a small area in what is now northeastern Oklahoma; the Sauk Indians, who were forced to leave the Midwest and now live in a small area in north-central Oklahoma; and the Cherokee, who were forced to leave the Southeast for eastern Oklahoma. Those Indians who did not move west of the Mississippi were compelled to give up large portions of land over which they had previously had control and were concentrated on increasingly small and geographically isolated areas. The Chippewa in Wisconsin, for example, gave up control of the northern third of the state and retained only a very small amount of land for their own use." "As the population of European origin in the United States began to surge west of the Mississippi in the late 1800s, there was increasing pressure on the recently removed groups such as the Cherokee to give up some of their new land, and on the groups indigenous to the West, such as the Sioux, to give up large amounts of land traditionally under their control." "Some of this further expulsion was accomplished in a relatively peaceful manner through treaties, and some was accomplished through violent military confrontation. The lands reserved for Indian use were generally regarded as the least desirable by whites and were almost always located far from major population centers, trails, and transportation routes that later became part of the modern system of metropolitan areas, highways, and railroads. In sum, for most of the nineteenth century the policy of the U.S. government was to isolate and concentrate Indians in places with few natural resources, far from contact with the developing U.S. economy and society." "Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the federal government revised its principal approach to the "Indian problem" to one of forced assimilation rather than forced isolation. This change in policy was in part motivated by awareness that the quality of life on the isolated reservations was very, very low. The concerns about the reservations resembled in many respects the current analyses of problems in the central city. The Eastern media and intellectuals viewed the conditions on the reservations as unacceptable and in need of immediate and drastic action." "This assimilation was to be accomplished through allotment policy, and the first allotment legislation (the Dawes Act) was passed in 1887. The basic idea was to divide into smaller parcels (often 160 acres) the small areas of land that were at that time controlled by the various groups of Indians, and to allot one of these parcels to each Indian in the particular tribe. The goal of this policy was to enable Indians to become farmers or ranchers, the major occupations in the areas where Indians were located, and full members of American society. A side benefit was that "surplus" land was purchased from Indian groups at low prices and opened up for white settlement." "Allotment did not have the desired healthy consequences for American Indians. The conclusion of most observers was that the Indian groups who experienced allotment were no better off, and in some cases worse off, than before. The enthusiasm for allotment as a solution to the Indian problem gradually subsided, and many reservations remained intact." "The next major attack on the reservation system occurred in the early 1950s. Public opinion and political leaders were distressed by the miserable living conditions on Indian reservations, on the one hand, and the special legal relationship between American Indian groups and the federal government, on the other hand. In 1953, termination legislation was passed and signed into law. The intent of this legislation was to end the special relationship between Indian tribes and the federal government. Reservations would cease to exist as independent political entities. To accompany this program," "The federal government also instituted an employment and relocation program which provided financial assistance and social services to Indians who wanted to leave reservations and isolated rural areas for urban areas with supposedly better employment prospects. Only a few tribes were terminated before this approach was abandoned, but a very limited relocation and employment assistance program is still in place." "Since the 1950s the proportion of the American Indian population living on reservations has declined from over 50 percent to approximately 25 percent in 1980. This decline has been due to the migration of American Indians away from these impoverished, isolated areas. In 1980, 336,384 American Indians lived on reservations. Although some of these reservations are quite small, 250,379 Indians lived on 36 reservations with populations of 2,000 or more. Three-quarters of these Indians lived on the 18 reservations that had poverty rates of 40 percent or higher. In other words, approximately 14 percent of all American Indians in 1980 lived on large reservations with poverty rates of 40 percent or higher.[7]"

The US Department of the Interior website states that:

“The United States has a unique legal and political relationship with Indian tribes and Alaska Native entities as provided by the Constitution of the United States, treaties, court decisions and Federal statutes. Within the government-to-government relationship, Indian Affairs provides services directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts to 564 federally recognized tribes with a service population of about 1.9 million American Indian and Alaska Natives. While the role of Indian Affairs has changed significantly in the last three decades in response to a greater emphasis on Indian self-governance and self-determination, Tribes still look to Indian Affairs for a broad spectrum of services.”” “The Indian Affairs offers an extensive scope of programs that covers the entire range of Federal, State and local government services. Programs administered by either Tribes or Indian Affairs through the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) include an education system consisting of 183 schools and dormitories educating approximately 42,000 elementary and secondary students and 28 tribal colleges, universities, and post-secondary schools. Programs administered through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) include social services, natural resources management on trust lands representing 55 million surface acres and 57 million acres of subsurface minerals estates, economic development programs in some of the most isolated and economically depressed areas of the United States, law enforcement and detention services, administration of tribal courts, implementation of land and water claim settlements, housing improvement, disaster relief, replacement and repair of schools, repair and maintenance of roads and bridges, and the repair of structural deficiencies on high hazard dams, the BIA operates a series irrigation systems and provides electricity to a rural parts of Arizona.[8]”

Indian Boarding Schools (Kill the Indian, Save the Man)

“Quaker and missionary reformers explored new methods to 'civilize' the Indians. They were uncomfortable with extermination policies and began to formulate ideas of assimilation. These methods appealed to Richard Henry Pratt, who was already experimenting with his Ft. Marion charges. He agreed that to 'civilize' the Indian would be to turn him into a copy of his God-fearing, soil-tilling, white brother. By the end of their term of incarceration (1878), Pratt had convinced 17 prisoners to further their education by enrolling in the Hampton Institute in Virginia. ” “Hampton was founded in 1868 by Samuel Chapman Armstrong. It was a government boarding school for African-American children designed to educate by training "the head, the hand, and the heart.” Its goal was to train and return them to their communities to become leaders and professionals among their people. This fit Pratt's developing philosophies about assimilation, with the exception of returning to community. He began to formulate a model similar to Hampton - but exclusively for Indians.” “In an address to a convention of Baptist ministers in 1883 Pratt wrote: "In Indian civilization I am a Baptist, because I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked." So Pratt began his aggressive and relentless quest for a school of his own to begin his work. He lobbied Washington; he contacted his wealthy supporters in the East and convinced the powers that be that his experiment would be a success. He would take Indian children from the reservations, remove them to a school far away from tribal influences, and transform them.” “Pratt lobbied politicians for support for the school. He often visited Washington or entertained dignitaries at Carlisle. One of his early supporters was Senator Henry Dawes, author of the General Allotment Act, the US government policy which resulted in the loss of more than 40% of tribal lands. Pratt's assimilationist policies for education for Indians coupled with Dawes' checkerboarding allotment legislation formed a perceived potential solution for the "Indian Problem" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.” “[This person] evidently has the idea of Indians that Buffalo Bill and other [wild west] showmen keep alive, by hiring the reservation wild man to dress in his most hideous costume of feathers, paint, moccasins, blanket, leggins, and scalp lock, and to display his savagery, by hair lifting war-whoops make those who pay to see him, think he is a blood-thirsty creature ready to devour people alive. It is this nature in our red brother that is better dead than alive, and when we agree with the oft-repeated sentiment that the only good Indian is a dead one, we mean this characteristic of the Indian. Carlisle's mission is to kill THIS Indian, as we build up the better man.[9]”

Demographics

There are about 3 million Native Americans currently living in the US. Their tribal affiliations (as of census 2000) are16% Cherokee, 12% Navajo, 6% Chippewa, 6% Sioux, 4% Choctaw, 46% all other tribes. Less than 2% of the US population is Native American with 22.3% living on reservations and trust lands; 10.2% living in tribal jurisdiction statistical areas; 2.7% in tribal designated statistical areas; 2.4% in Alaska native village statistical areas. However, the largest group of American Indians, 62.3%, do not live on traditional tribal lands or reservations. 6.25% of all American Indians live in the Northeast US, 17.93% of all American Indians live in the Midwest US, 30.21% of all American Indians live in the Southern US, and 45.59% of all American Indians live in the Western US.[10]

States with Largest Native American Population11 Ibid.

States with Largest Native American Population



State	Total Population	Percent of Population
Oklahoma	252,132	12.6%
California	243,736	12.1%
Arizona	204,150	10.2%
New Mexico	133,816	6.7%
North Carolina	82,428	4.3%
Texas	68,565	4.1%
Michigan	58,667	4.0%
New York	57,425	3.3%
South Dakota	50,294	3.2%
Minnesota	49,106	2.8%

Figure 1.

Ten Largest Reservations (218,320 or 14%)12 Ibid.

Ten Largest Reservations



Tribe	Location	% of Total	Population
Navajo	AZ-NM-UT	7.17%	143,405
Pine Ridge	NE-SD	0.55%	11,182
Fort Apache	AZ	0.49%	9,825
Gila River	AZ	0.45%	9,116
Papago,	AZ	0.42%	8,480
Rosebud	SD	0.40%	8,043
San Carlos	AZ	0.35%	7,110
Zuni Pueblo	AZ-NM	0.35%	7,073
Hopi	AZ	0.35%	7,061
Blackfeet	MT	0.35%	7,025

Figure 2.

2.2.3 Asian Americans

Asian people have been in the US for hundreds of years and there is even some historical evidence that Chinese explorers reached the far Western coast of the US decades before Columbus; “according to Gavin Menzies, a former submarine commanding officer who has spent 14 years charting the movements of a Chinese expeditionary fleet between 1421 and 1423, the eunuch admiral, Zheng He, was there first.”[1234] It can even be argued that the native American Indians are immigrants from Asia because thousands of years ago they crossed a land bridge from Asia into North America. “Asia is the planet's largest continent, Asia covers about 30 percent of the world's landmass and includes (44) countries and assorted islands and/or dependencies. Significant features of the continent of Asia include the world's tallest mountain, Mt Everest in Nepal (and China), rising to 29,035 ft (8,850m). It also includes the world's lowest point, found in the Dead Sea, ”“Israel/Jordan,”“ at 1,286 ft (392m) below sea level. In addition, the continent includes the world's most populated countries, China and India; the world's longest coastline, the world's deepest lake; Lake Baykal, and some of the most important rivers on the planet.”[5]

Figure 1.

Because of the size of Asia, the people from that continent speak too many languages to list, but among those languages are: Cantonese, English, French, Fukinese, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Asian Americans can trace their backgrounds to: Mongolia, China, Japan, Siberia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Borneo, Tibet, New Guinea, Laos, Papua New Guinea, Nepal, Polynesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia, Melanesia, Myanmar (Burma), Brunei, Micronesia, Melanesia, Malaysia, Korea. Asian Americans may be white, brown, or black and may or may not have epicanthic eye folds. Asian Americans are culturally, linguistically, religiously, politically, racially, and ethnically diverse. Because of their supposed educational and economic success, they have been called a "model minority." However, in many ways this is a misnomer and creates problems for many Asian Americans. The term "model minority" presumes that **all** Asian Americans are high achievers and **all** Asian Americans are economically and educationally successful, but, as with any group, this is a stereotype and economic and educational success and failure are as equally divided among Asian Americans as they are among any other racial or ethnic group. Moreover, the idea of a "model minority" also makes the assumption that there is something wrong with all other minorities if they don't "measure up" to Asian Americans. Therefore, "model minority" is a racist idea and a racist term. And, as with any other non-white minority, Asians have suffered from discrimination in the form of wide-spread, generalized anti-Asian sentiment as well as discriminatory laws that prevented Asians from becoming citizens, prohibited land ownership, inhibited immigration, and generally made the lives of Asian-Americans difficult at best. Nonetheless, Asians have come to the US in small but relatively constant numbers before the founding of the country. They have also prospered in spite of the limitations placed on them.

"The early Chinese immigrants were begrudgingly accepted by Americans and were not the immediate targets of animosity or violence. However, taxes aimed at foreigners made earning wages difficult. California passed the foreign mine tax in the 1850s, which directly affected the majority of the Chinese immigrants who were working in the mines. In addition, they were required to pay an alien poll tax of $2.50 per month until 1862, when it was declared unconstitutional." "Additional discriminatory legislation the Chinese faced during the latter half of the 19th century pertained to segregated schools, lodging ordinances, laundry licensing fees, prohibition of intermarriage with whites, and bans from sections of cities. In 1854, a California judge's ruling barred Chinese immigrants from testifying in court after the testimonies of Chinese witnesses resulted in the murder conviction of a white man. The judge reversed the verdict citing the Criminal Act of 1850, which had previously prohibited blacks, mulattos, and Indians from testifying for or against a white man. By 1855 Chinese merchants began organizing to protest these and other discriminatory acts. Eventually this organization became known as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, or the Chinese Six Companies. The Chinese Six Companies settled arguments within their own community, negotiated between the Chinese people and the federal and state governments, and hired lawyers to challenge unfair practices in court. " "The main sources of anti-Chinese sentiment during this time were workers' groups who described the influx of Asian workers to the United States as 'yellow peril.' In addition to widespread intolerance for people of color, many labor groups held that cheap immigrant labor would lower wages for American workers. In the 1870s, the Anti-Coolies Association and the Supreme Order of the Caucasians ran boycotts of Chinese businesses and laborers and caused riots in Chinatowns across the West. Many immigrants returned to China, while others fled to San Francisco, home to the largest Chinese community and Chinatown in the United States.[7]"

Demographics

There Are 10.9 Million Asians Currently Living in the US. They come from all over Asia, but the largest countries of origin are shown in the figure below.

Countries of Origin

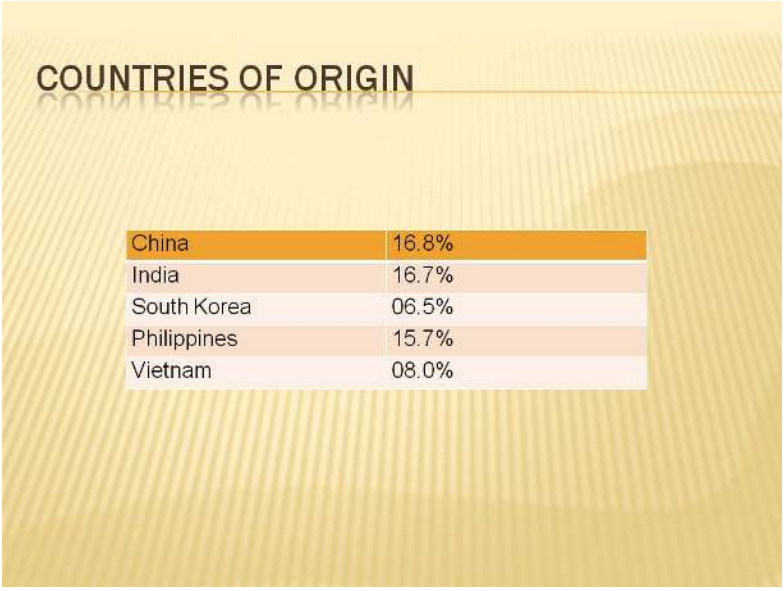


Figure 2.

About 4% of the US population is Asian with 18% living in the Northeast US, 10% living in the Midwest, 20% in the South, and 53% in the West. Nearly half of all Asians live in a central city within a major metropolitan area.

States with Largest Asian Populations



Figure 3.

Metropolitan Areas with Largest Asian Populations

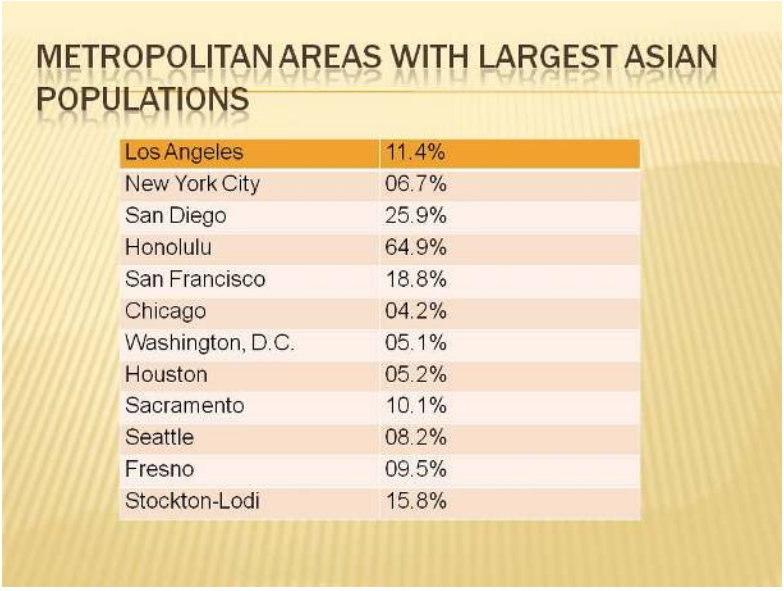


Figure 4.

Asians are younger compared to white Americans: 29% of all Asians are under 18 (compared to 23.5% for non-Hispanic whites), 64.0% are between 18-64 (compared to 62.4% for non-Hispanic whites), and 7.0% are over 65 (compared to 14% for non-Hispanic whites). Asians have larger than average families: 23.0% have five or more members (as compared to 11.8% for non-Hispanic whites); also Asians are less likely to marry—34% have never married (compared to 24.5% of non-Hispanic whites)—but only half as likely to be divorced as non-Hispanic whites. Asians do receive more education: only 8% did not go past 9th grade as compared to 4.2% for non-Hispanic whites, while 15% went to high school but did not graduate as compared to 7.3% for non-Hispanic whites. And although only 45% are high school graduates as compared to 60.3% for non-Hispanic whites, 85% have at least a high school diploma as compared to 88.4% for non-Hispanic whites. When it comes to higher education however, the numbers shift dramatically—42% of all Asian Americans have a bachelors degree as compare to 28.1% for non-Hispanic whites. Asians are employed (and unemployed) at about the same rate as non-Hispanic whites but are more likely to work in managerial and professional occupations. However, Asians are more likely to be poor than non-Hispanic whites: 13% of all Asians live in poverty as compared to 8% of non-Hispanic whites, 11% of all poor in the US are Asian, 18% of all Asian children are poor as compared to 11% of all non-Hispanic whites. But, Asian Americans are slightly more likely to have high incomes: 59% of Asian Americans earn $50,000-$75,000 annually compared to 58% for non-Hispanic whites while 25% earn $25,000-$50,000 as compared to 28% for non-Hispanic whites.

Asian American Business Ownership



Figure 5.

A Chronology

Asians have been in the Americas permanently since the 1600s, and although they have never been a large segment of the American population they have still been an important addition to the American character. This chronology lists some of the most important events in the lives of Asians in America.

1600s—Chinese and Filipinos reach Mexico on ships of the Manila galleon.

1830s—Chinese "sugar masters" begin working in Hawaii, while Chinese sailors and peddlers arrive in New York.

1839-1844—US and China sign first treaty: the Treaty of Wangxia

1848—Gold discovered in California, Chinese begin to arrive.

1850—California imposes Foreign Miner's Tax and enforces it mainly against Chinese miners, who often had to pay more than once.

1852—First group of 195 Chinese contract laborers land in Hawaii. Over 20,000 Chinese enter California primarily due to the gold rush. Chinese first appear in court in California. Missionary William Speer opens Presbyterian mission for Chinese in San Francisco.

1854—Chinese in Hawaii establish a funeral society, their first community association in the islands. People v Hall rules that Chinese can't give testimony in court. US and Japan sign first treaty: The Treaty of Kanagawa

1857—San Francisco opens a school for Chinese children (changed to an evening school two years later). Missionary Augustus Loomis arrives to serve the Chinese in San Francisco.

1858—California passes a law to bar entry of Chinese and "Mongolians."

1860—Japan sends a diplomatic mission to US.

1862—Six Chinese district associations in San Francisco form loose federation. California imposes a "police tax" of $250 a month on every Chinese, this was called the anti-coolie tax.

1865—Central Pacific Railroad Company recruits Chinese workers for the transcontinental railroad.[8]

1867—Two thousand Chinese railroad workers strike for a week.

1868—US and China sign Burlingame-Seward Treaty recognizing rights of their citizens to emigrate. Eugene Van Reed illegally ships 149 Japanese laborers to Hawaii.

Sam Damon[9] opens Sunday school for Chinese in Hawaii.

1869—Completion of first transcontinental railroad.[10] JH Schnell takes several dozen Japanese to California to establish the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony.[11] Chinese Christian evangelist SP Aheong starts preaching in Hawaii.

1870—California passes a law against the importation of Chinese, Japanese, and "Mongolian" women for prostitution.[12]Chinese railroad workers in Texas sue company for failing to pay wages.

1872—California's Civil Procedure Code drops law barring Chinese court testimony.

1875—Page Law bars entry of Chinese, Japanese, and "Mongolian" prostitutes, felons, and contract laborers.

1877—Anti-Chinese violence in Chico, California. Japanese Christians set up the Gospel Society in San Francisco, the first immigrant association formed by the Japanese.

1878—In re Ah Yup rules Chinese not eligible for naturalized citizenship. (For more information about this issue, please see the following websites: The Racial Classification Cases; Google Timeline for In re Ah Yup; Unsuitable Suitors by Deenesh Sohoni.)

1879—California's second constitution prevents municipalities and corporations from employing Chinese. California state legislature passes law requiring all incorporated towns and cities to expel Chinese to outside of city limits, but US circuit court declares the law unconstitutional.

1880—US and China sign treaty giving the US the right to limit but "not absolutely prohibit" Chinese immigration. Section 69 of California's Civil Code prohibits issuing of licenses for marriages between whites and "Mongolians, Negroes, mulattoes and persons of mixed blood."

1881—Hawaiian King Kalakaua visits Japan during his world tour. Sit Moon becomes pastor of the first Chinese Christian church in Hawaii.

1882—Chinese Exclusion Law suspends immigration of laborers for ten years. Chinese community leaders form Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA or Chinese Six Companies) in San Francisco. US and Korea sign first treaty. Chinese Exclusion Law amended to require a certificate as the only permissible evidence for reentry.

1883—Chinese in New York establish CCBA.

1884—Joseph and Mary Tape sue San Francisco school board to enroll their daughter Mamie in a public school. Chinese Six Companies sets up Chinese language school in San Francisco. United Chinese Society established in Honolulu. CCBA established in Vancouver.

1885—San Francisco builds new segregated "Oriental School." Anti-Chinese violence at Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory. First group of Japanese contract laborers arrives in Hawaii under the Irwin Convention.

1886—Residents of Tacoma, Seattle, and many places in the American West forcibly expel the Chinese. End of Chinese immigration to Hawaii. Chinese laundrymen win case in Yick Wo v Hopkins, which declares that a law with unequal impact on different groups is discriminatory.

1888—Scott Act renders 20,000 Chinese reentry certificates null and void.

1889—First Nishi Hongwanji priest from Japan arrives in Hawaii. Chae Chan Ping v US upholds constitutionality of Chinese exclusion laws; for Chinese Americans, this law had the same effect as Plessy v. Ferguson in that made discrimination based on race the law of the land.

1892—Geary Law renews exclusion of Chinese laborers for another ten years and requires all Chinese to register. Fong Yue Ting v US upholds constitutionality of Geary Law.

1893—Japanese in San Francisco form first trade association, the Japanese Shoemakers' League. Attempts are made to expel Chinese from towns in Southern California.

1894—Sun Yat-sen founds the Xingzhonghui in Honolulu. US circuit court in Massachusetts declares in In re Saito that Japanese are ineligible for naturalization. Japanese immigration to Hawaii under Irwin Convention ends and emigration companies take over.

1895—Lem Moon Sing v US rules that district courts can no longer review Chinese habeas corpus petitions for landing in the US.

1896—Shinsei Kaneko, a Japanese Californian, is naturalized. Bubonic plague scare in Honolulu - Chinatown burned.

1897—Nishi Hongwanji includes Hawaii as a mission field.

1898—Wong Kim Ark v US decides that Chinese born in the US can't be stripped of their citizenship. Japanese in San Francisco set up Young Men's Buddhist Association. US annexes Hawaii and the Philippines.

1899—Chinese reformers Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao tour North America to recruit members for the Baohuanghui. First Nishi Hongwanji priests arrive in California and set up North American Buddhist Mission.

1900—Japanese Hawaiian plantation workers begin going to the mainland after the Organic Act ended contract labor. Bubonic plague scare in San Francisco - Chinatown cordoned and quarantined.

1902—Chinese exclusion extended for another ten years. Immigration officials and the police raid Boston's Chinatown and, without search warrants, arrest almost 250 Chinese who allegedly had no registration certificates on their persons.

1903—First group of Korean workers arrives in Hawaii. 1500 Japanese and Mexican sugar beet workers strike in Oxnard, California. Koreans in Hawaii form Korean Evangelical Society. Filipino students (pensionados) arrive in the US for higher education.

1904—Chinese exclusion made indefinite and applicable to US insular possessions. Japanese plantation workers engage in first organized strike in Hawaii. Punjabi Sikhs begin to enter British Columbia.

1905—Chinese in the US and Hawaii support boycott of American products in China. Koreans establish Korean Episcopal Church in Hawaii and Korean Methodist Church in California. San Francisco School Board attempts to segregate Japanese schoolchildren.

1905—Korean emigration ends. Koreans in San Francisco form Mutual Assistance Society. Asiatic Exclusion League formed in San Francisco. Section 60 of California's Civil Code amended to forbid marriage between whites and "Mongolians."

1906—Anti-Asian riot in Vancouver. Japanese nurserymen form California Flower Growers' Association. Koreans establish Korean Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles. Japanese scientists studying the aftermath of the San Francisco earthquake are stoned.

1907—Japan and the US reach "Gentlemen's Agreement" whereby Japan stops issuing passports to laborers desiring to emigrate to the US. President Theodore Roosevelt signs Executive Order 589 prohibiting Japanese with passports for Hawaii, Mexico, or Canada to re-emigrate to the US. Koreans form United Korean Society in Hawaii

First group of Filipino laborers arrives in Hawaii. Asian Indians are driven out of Bellingham, Washington.

1908—Japanese form Japanese Association of America. Canada curbs Asian Indian immigrants by denying entry to immigrants who haven't come by "continuous journey" from their homelands (there is no direct shipping between Indian and Canadian ports). Asian Indians are driven out of Live Oak, California.

1909—Koreans form Korean Nationalist Association. 7000 Japanese plantation workers strike major plantations on Oahu for four months.

1910—Administrative measures used to restrict influx of Asian Indians into California.

1911—Pablo Manlapit forms Filipino Higher Wages Association in Hawaii. Japanese form Japanese Association of Oregon in Portland.

1912—Sikhs build gurdwara in Stockton and establish Khalsa Diwan. Japanese in California hold statewide conference on Nisei education

1913—California passes alien land law prohibiting "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from buying land or leasing it for longer than three years. Sikhs in Washington and Oregon establish Hindustani Association. Asian Indians in California found the revolutionary Ghadar Party and start publishing a newspaper. Pablo Manlapit forms Filipino Unemployed Association in Hawaii. Japanese form Northwest Japanese Association of America in Seattle. Korean farm workers are driven out of Hemet, California.

1914—Aspiring Asian Indian immigrants who had chartered a ship to come to Canada by continuous journey are denied landing in Vancouver.

1915—Japanese form Central Japanese Association of Southern California and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce.

1917—Arizona passes an Alien Land Law. 1917 Immigration Law defines a geographic "barred zone" (including India) from which no immigrants can come. Syngman Rhee founds the Korean Christian Church in Hawaii.

1918—Servicemen of Asian ancestry who had served in World War I receive right of naturalization. Asian Indians form the Hindustani Welfare Reform Association in the Imperial and Coachella valleys in southern California.

1919—Japanese form Federation of Japanese Labor in Hawaii.

1920—10,000 Japanese and Filipino plantation workers go on strike. Japan stops issuing passports to picture brides due to anti-Japanese sentiments. Initiative in California ballot plugs up loopholes in the 1913 alien land law.

1921—Japanese farm workers driven out of Turlock, California. Filipinos establish a branch of the Caballeros Dimas Alang in San Francisco and a branch of the Legionarios del Trabajo in Honolulu. Washington and Louisiana pass alien land laws.

1922—Takao Ozawa v US declares Japanese not eligible for naturalized citizenship. New Mexico passes an alien land law. Cable Act declares that any American female citizen who marries "an alien ineligible to citizenship" would lose her citizenship.

1923—US v Bhagat Singh Thind declares Asian Indians not eligible for naturalized citizenship. Idaho, Montana, and Oregon pass alien land laws. Terrace v Thompson upholds constitutionality of Washington's alien land law. Porterfield v Webb upholds constitutionality of California's alien land law. Webb v O'Brien rules that sharecropping is illegal because it is a ruse that allows Japanese to possess and use land. Frick v Webb forbids aliens "ineligible to citizenship" from owning stocks in corporations formed for farming.

1924—Immigration Act (also titled the Johnson-Reid Act) denies entry to virtually all Asians. 1600 Filipino plantation workers strike for eight months in Hawaii.

1925—Warring tongs in North America's Chinatowns declare truce Hilario Moncado founds Filipino Federation of America.

1928—Filipino farm workers are driven out of Yakima Valley, Washington. Filipinos in Los Angeles form Filipino American Christian Fellowship.

1930—Anti-Filipino riot in Watsonville, California.

1931—Amendment to Cable Act declares that no American-born woman who loses her citizenship (by marrying an alien ineligible to citizenship) can be denied the right of naturalization at a later date.

1934—Tydings - McDuffie Act spells out procedure for eventual Philippine independence and reduces Filipino immigration to 50 persons a year. Filipino lettuce pickers in the Salinas Valley, California, go on strike.

1936—American Federation of Labor grants charter to a Filipino - Mexican union of fieldworkers.

1937—Last ethnic strike in Hawaii.

1938—150 Chinese women garment workers strike for three months against the National Dollar Stores (owned by a Chinese).

1940—AFL charters the Filipino Federated Agricultural Laborers Association.

1941—After declaring war on Japan, 2000 Japanese community leaders along Pacific Coast states and Hawaii are rounded up and interned in Department of Justice camps.

1942—President Franklin D Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 authorizing the secretary of war to delegate a military commander to designate military areas "from which any and all persons may be excluded" - primarily enforced against Japanese. Congress passes Public Law 503 to impose penal sanctions on anyone disobeying orders to carry out Executive Order 9066. Protests at Poston and Manzanar relocation centers.

1943—Protest at Topaz Relocation Center Registration crisis leads to Tule Lake Relocation Center's designation as a segregation center. Hawaiian Nisei in the 100th Battalion sent to Africa. Congress repeals all Chinese exclusion laws, grants right of naturalization and a small immigration quota to Chinese.

1944—Tule Lake placed under martial law. Draft reinstated for Nisei. Draft resistance at Heart Mountain Relocation Center. 442nd Regimental Combat Team gains fame. Exclusion orders revoked.

1946—Luce-Celler bill grants right of naturalization and small immigration quotas to Asian Indians and Filipinos. Wing F. Ong [13] becomes first Asian American to be elected to state office in the Arizona House of Representatives.

1947—Amendment to 1945 War Brides Act allows Chinese American veterans to bring brides into the US.

1949—5000 highly educated Chinese in the US granted refugee status after China institutes a Communist government.

1952—One clause of the McCarran - Walter Act grants the right of naturalization and a small immigration quota to Japanese.

1956—California repeals its alien land laws. Dalip Singh Saund from the Imperial Valley, California, is elected to Congress.

1962—Daniel K Inouye becomes US senator and Spark Matsunaga becomes US congressman from Hawaii.

1964—Patsy Takemoto Mink becomes first Asian American woman to serve in Congress as representative from Hawaii.

1965—Immigration Law abolishes "national origins" as basis for allocating immigration quotas to various countries - Asian countries now on equal footing.

1968—Students on strike at San Francisco State University to demand establishment of ethnic studies programs.

1969—Students at the University of California, Berkeley, go on strike for establishment of ethnic studies programs.

1974—March Fong Eu elected California's secretary of state. Lau v Nichols rules that school districts with children who speak little English must provide them with bilingual education.

1975—More than 130,000 refugees enter the US from Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos as Communist governments are established there.

1976—President Gerald Ford rescinds Executive Order 9066.

1978—National convention of the Japanese American Citizens League adopts resolution calling for redress and reparations for the internment of Japanese Americans. Massive exodus of "boat people" from Vietnam.

1979—Resumption of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States of America reunites members of long-separated Chinese American families.

1980—The Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees set up an Orderly Departure Program to enable Vietnamese to emigrate legally.

1981—Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (set up by Congress) holds hearings across the country and concludes the internment was a "grave injustice" and that Executive Order 9066 resulted from "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."

1982—Vincent Chin, a Chinese American draftsman, is clubbed to death with a baseball bat by two Euro-American men.

1983—Fred Korematsu, Min Yasui, and Gordon Hirabayashi file petitions to overturn their World War II convictions for violating the curfew and evacuation orders.

1986—Immigration Reform and Control Act imposes civil and criminal penalties on employers who knowingly hire undocumented aliens.

1987—The US House of Representatives votes 243 to 141 to make an official apology to Japanese Americans and to pay each surviving internee $20,000 in reparations.

1988—The US Senate votes 69% to 27 to support redress for Japanese Americans. American Homecoming Act allows children in Vietnam born of American fathers to emigrate to the US.

1989—President George Bush signs into law an entitlement program to pay each surviving Japanese American internee $20,000. US reaches agreement with Vietnam to allow political prisoners to emigrate to the US.

Asian Americans Today

Discrimination and prejudice do not cease to exist merely because there are laws that protect the rights of people in the US regardless of race or ethnicity. Minority groups often hold racist or at the very least prejudicial stereotypes about each other which can lead to violence. Even in the political arena, people are much more likely to vote for a candidate who is of the same race or ethnicity as themselves even when that candidate may not be the best choice for the office. We are less likely to vote for people who are different from ourselves and minorities often do not support other minorities.[14] Moreover, thinking back to Thomas's Theorem—that which is perceived to be real is real in its consequences—it would take a concerted, deliberate effort by every person every day to not notice the race or ethnicity of others. Thus, Asian Nation. Org states:

"As many social scientists have noted, there are "two primary stereotypes "that continue to affect Asian Americans. One is that "all Asian Americans are the same". That is, many people are either unable or unwilling to distinguish between different Asian ethnicities -- Korean American from a Japanese American, Filipino American from an Indonesian American, etc. This becomes a problem when people generalize certain beliefs or stereotypes about one or a few Asian Americans to the entire Asian American population. The result is that important differences between Asian ethnic groups are minimized or ignored altogether, sometimes leading to disastrous results." "The second stereotype is that "all Asian Americans are foreigners". Although more than half of all

Asians in the U.S. were born outside the U.S., many non-Asians simply assume that every Asian they see, meet, or hear about is a foreigner. Many can't recognize that many Asian American families have been U.S. citizens for several generations. As a result, because all Asian Americans are perceived as foreigners, it becomes easier to think of us as not fully American and then to deny us the same rights that other Americans take for granted. Yes, that means prejudice and discrimination in its many forms."

In his article "Hate" by Patrick Walters The Associated Press January 21, 2010.

"The blocks surrounding South Philadelphia High School are a melting pot of pizzerias fronted by Italian flags, African hair-braiding salons and a growing number of Chinese, Vietnamese and Indonesian restaurants." "Inside is a cauldron of cultural discontent that erupted in violence last month - off-campus and lunchroom attacks on about 50 Asian students, injuring 30, primarily at the hands of blacks. The Asian students, who boycotted classes for more than a week afterward, say they've endured relentless bullying by black students while school officials turned a blind eye to their complaints." "'We have suffered a lot to get to America and we didn't come here to fight,' Wei Chen, president of the Chinese American Student Association, told the school board in one of several hearings on the violence. 'We just want a safe environment to learn and make more friends. That's my dream.'""Philadelphia school officials suspended 10 students, increased police patrols and installed dozens of new security cameras to watch the halls, where 70 percent of the students are black and 18 percent Asian. The Vietnamese embassy complained to the U.S. State Department about the attacks and numerous groups are investigating, including the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission." "The New York-based Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund joined the fray this week with a civil rights complaint to the U.S. Justice Department. [15]"

And in "Society" by James Glanz *The New York Times* July 16, 2000, the author argues that:

"Asian and Asian-American scientists are staying away from jobs at national weapons laboratories, particularly Los Alamos, saying that researchers of Asian descent are systematically harassed and denied advancement because of their race." "The issue has long simmered at the laboratories, but it came to a boil last year with the arrest of Dr. Wen Ho Lee, who is accused of mishandling nuclear secrets at Los Alamos. Though officials vehemently deny it, many Asian-Americans said Dr. Lee, a naturalized citizen born in Taiwan, was singled out because of his ethnicity.""In any event, Asians and Asian-Americans said, security procedures implemented after Dr. Lee's arrest fall hardest on them. Since the arrest, some scholarly groups have even called for a boycott of the laboratories, urging Asian and Asian-American scientists not to apply for jobs with them.[16]"

Clearly, anti-Asian attitudes are still alive and well in the United States as are so many of the prejudices that we harbor.

Footnotes

- 1http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/1386655/Explorer-from-China-who-beat-Columbus-to-America.html
- 2 blogcritics.org/culture/artic...-the-globe-80/
- 3 http://www.pbs.org/previews/1421/
- 4 http://maritimeasia.ws/topic/1421bunkum.html
- 5http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/as.htm
- 6 CIA World Factbook.
- 7http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/chinese-boycott/
- 8 http://cprr.org/Museum/Chinese.html
- "Samuel Chenery Damon was born in Massachusetts in 1815. After graduating from Amherst and Theological Seminary at Andover in Massachusetts, he was sent to Honolulu in 1842 by the American Seamen's Friend Society in the company of his wife, Julia Mills Damon."www.hcucc.org/HawaiiConferenc...9/Default.aspx
- 10 Visit this site for early photos and maps of the transcontinental railroad. http://cprr.org/Museum/Archive/index.html
- "In 1869, a group of Japanese people from Aizu Wakamatsu in modern Fukushima Prefecture in Japan, led by John Henry Schnell, arrived in California with the purpose of settling in California and to establish the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony at Gold Hill. ""The Japanese people, who journeyed to San Francisco with John Schnell and his Japanese wife were in all likelihood the first group from Japan to arrive and settle in the United States. The Wakamatsu party arrived in Sacramento, then proceeded to Placerville and nearby Gold Hill where Schnell had arranged to purchase 160 acres from Charles M. Graner. They brought mulberry trees, silkworm cocoons, tea plants and bamboo shoots in the hopes of establishing an agricultural settlement. They also brought cooking utensils, swords and a large banner bearing the crest of the Aizu Wakamatsu clan.""The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Farm Colony struggled to survive for several years but was plagued by an insufficient water supply, lack of adequate funding, labor dispute and other economic problems." arconservancy.org/xoops/modul....php?itemid=71
- "Chinese custom dictated that the wife of a prospective emigrant ought to stay behind to take care of her husband's parents, so the vast majority of Chinese immigrant men left for America on their own. Many came with the full intention of returning to

their homeland after having made a sufficient profit; in fact, most sent money back to China to support their families throughout the course of their stay in the US. ”“The Page Act of 1870 prohibited all ‘Chinese, Japanese, and Mongolian women’ from entering the US for the purpose of engaging in ‘immoral or licentious activities.’ This law mandated a series of humiliating character interrogations for women applying for visas, which, in any case, were rarely granted. The assumption was that Chinese women inherently wanted to become prostitutes. There were, in fact, as many as 900 Chinese prostitutes in San Francisco during the late 1870s, but most of these young girls were kidnapped, sold, captured, or lured from China by false promises of marriage. They would then be contracted to a brothel in one of America's emerging Chinatowns. ”“The existence of these Chinese prostitutes was seen as a public health threat because they presumably carried strange and extraordinarily potent venereal diseases. The Page Act was an attempt to quell that threat. The reality was that, aside from on the West Coast, there were relatively few Chinese prostitutes in America. In New York’s Chinatown, for example, the vast majority of prostitutes were white. Nevertheless, the Page Act effectively prevented immigrants already in the US from bringing their wives over from China. ”“To complicate matters, white working class men began to see Chinese laborers as dangerous competition-a threat to their own economic well-being. In response to these fears, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 cut off almost all Chinese immigration, exempting only merchants and students, who were, presumably, less likely to steal American jobs. Chinese wives of immigrant laborers now had no legal means to join their husbands in America.”
http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/CreativeNonfiction/spring01/tsai.html

- “Wing F. Ong was the first Chinese American to serve in a state legislature in the United States. Despite barriers to his education by language and statutes in the early 1900’s, Mr. Ong, as a young immigrant, enrolled in elementary school at the age of 15. He went on to high school and the University of Arizona. Financial difficulties interrupted his education, and Mr. Ong started a grocery business that helped sustain his family. He later enrolled in Phoenix College and went on to law school at the University of Arizona. He graduated in 1943 at the top of his law school class, and became one of eight Chinese American lawyers in the United States. He lost his first bid for elected office in 1941, but won a seat in the Arizona House of Representatives in 1946 where he served until 1950. After a period in private practice, Mr. Ong served a term in the Arizona State Senate in the 1960s. Mr. Ong was also appointed as the goodwill ambassador to the Republic of China by Governor Sam Goddard in 1965.” www.napaba.org/napaba/showpag...lazers2005#Ong
- 14 Bloc Voting, Polarization, and the Panethnic Hypothesis: The Case of Little Saigon**.** Christian Collet. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), pp. 907-933. Published by: Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Southern Political Science Association.
- 15 Hate by Patrick WaltersThe Associated Press January 21, 2010. www.modelminority.com/joomla/index.php.
- 16 Society by James Glanz *The New York Times* July 16, 2000. www.modelminority.com/joomla/index.php

2.2.4 Hispanic Americans

Background in America

The word Hispanic as a designation of ethnicity was created by Directive 15 (1977) of the US Office of Management and Budget which is the federal agency that defines standards for government publications. “The categories are not based on biological or anthropological concepts. ‘Hispanic’ is considered a designation of ethnicity, not race, and people of Hispanic origin can be of any race. OMB developed these categories in response to the need for standardized data for record keeping and data collection and presentation by federal agencies (e.g., to conduct federal surveys, collect decennial census data, and monitor civil rights laws).”[1]According to the US Census Bureau “Persons of Hispanic origin were identified by a question that asked for self-identification of the person's origin or descent. Respondents were asked to select their origin (and the origin of other household members) from a ‘flash card’ listing ethnic origins. Persons of Hispanic origin, in particular, were those who indicated that their origin was Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or some other Hispanic origin. It should be noted that persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.”[2] Consider this definition of Hispanic from The Free Dictionary.com.

His·pan·ic“ (hĭ-spăn-ĭk)” “adj. ”1.“ Of or relating to Spain or Spanish-speaking Latin America.”2.“ Of or relating to a Spanish-speaking people or culture.” “n. ”1.“ A Spanish-speaking person. ”2.“ A U.S. citizen or resident of Latin-American or Spanish descent.” “[Latin Hispānicus, from Hispānia, Spain.] ”Usage Note“**:** Though often used interchangeably in American English, Hispanic and Latino are not identical terms, and in certain contexts the choice between them can be significant. Hispanic, from the Latin word for "Spain," has the broader reference, potentially encompassing all Spanish-speaking peoples in both hemispheres and emphasizing the common denominator of language among communities that sometimes have little else in common. Latino—which in Spanish means "Latin" but which as an English word is probably a shortening of the Spanish word latinoamericano—refers more exclusively to persons or communities of Latin American origin. Of the two, only Hispanic can be used in referring to Spain and its

history and culture; a native of Spain residing in the United States is a Hispanic, not a Latino, and one cannot substitute Latino in the phrase the Hispanic influence on native Mexican cultures without garbling the meaning. In practice, however, this distinction is of little significance when referring to residents of the United States, most of whom are of Latin American origin and can theoretically be called by either word. A more important distinction concerns the sociopolitical rift that has opened between Latino and Hispanic in American usage. For a certain segment of the Spanish-speaking population, Latino is a term of ethnic pride and Hispanic a label that borders on the offensive. According to this view, Hispanic lacks the authenticity and cultural resonance of Latino, with its Spanish sound and its ability to show the feminine form Latina when used of women. Furthermore, Hispanic—the term used by the U.S. Census Bureau and other government agencies—is said to bear the stamp of an Anglo establishment far removed from the concerns of the Spanish-speaking community. While these views are strongly held by some, they are by no means universal, and the division in usage seems as related to geography as it is to politics, with Latino widely preferred in California and Hispanic the more usual term in Florida and Texas. Even in these regions, however, usage is often mixed, and it is not uncommon to find both terms used by the same writer or speaker.[3]"

In other words, the term Hispanic is fraught with difficulties. If Hispanics can be of any race, then they are not "officially" considered a racial group; thus Hispanics are considered an ethnicity—they share a common culture, a common language, and a sense of peoplehood. But what common culture is shared by Argentinians, Spaniards, and Mexicans? What common culture is shared by Brazilians and Tierra del Fuegoans? Nonetheless, Hispanics or Latinos do see themselves as a separate and distinct "racial" group in the US regardless of the definitions of the government or the social sciences.

Demographics

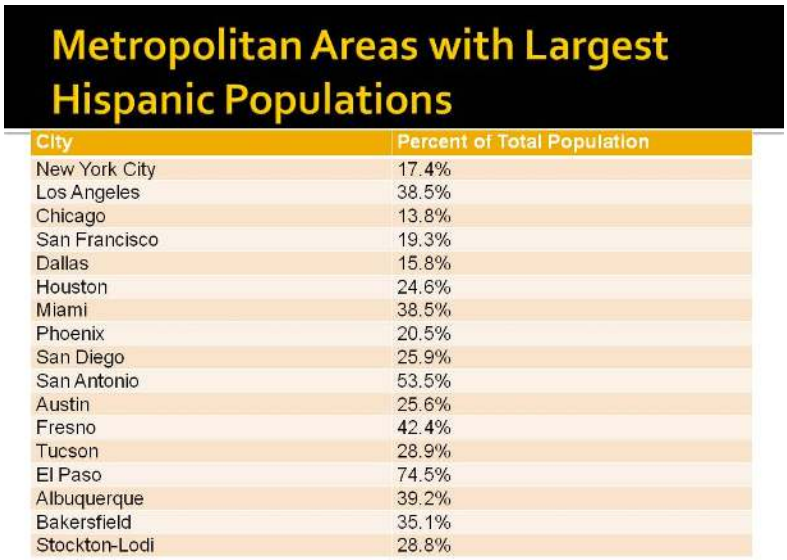
Hispanic Americans speak many, many languages, but their major languages are Creole, English, Portuguese, and Spanish. Hispanic Americans come from the Caribbean, Central America, North America, Portugal, South America, and Spain.

As of 2008, there are 32.8 million Hispanics currently living in the US; 66.1% are of Mexican descent, 14.5 % are of Central and South American descent, 9.0% are originally from Puerto Rico, 4.0% are originally Cuban, and 6.4% come from unspecified locations.[4] The United States is rapidly becoming a minority-majority country and the fastest growing segment of the population is Hispanic with a 33% increase over the eight years from 2000-2008.[5] The current (2008) Hispanic population of the US is about 15% of the total. According to the 2000 census, 14.1% of all Hispanic Americans live in the Northeast US, 7.9% in the Midwest, 33.2% in the South, and 44.7% in the Western states. Nearly half of all Hispanics live in a central city within a major metropolitan area.[6]



State	Percent of Total Population
AZ	23.8%
CA	37.2%
FL	17.4%
IL	12.1%
NM	44.47%
NY	14.6%
TX	34.4%

Figure 1.



Metropolitan Areas with Largest Hispanic Populations

City	Percent of Total Population
New York City	17.4%
Los Angeles	38.5%
Chicago	13.8%
San Francisco	19.3%
Dallas	15.8%
Houston	24.6%
Miami	38.5%
Phoenix	20.5%
San Diego	25.9%
San Antonio	53.5%
Austin	25.6%
Fresno	42.4%
Tucson	28.9%
El Paso	74.5%
Albuquerque	39.2%
Bakersfield	35.1%
Stockton-Lodi	28.8%

Figure 2.

Hispanics are younger compared to white Americans: 35.7% of all Hispanics are under 18 compared to 23.5% for non-Hispanic whites, 59.0% are between 18 and 64 compared to 62.4% for non-Hispanic whites, and only 5.3% are over 65 compared to 14.0% for non-Hispanic whites. 39.1% (12.8 million) Hispanics are foreign born and 25% of all foreign born Hispanics are naturalized citizens. 43.0% of the foreign born entered the US in the 1990s, 29.7% came in the 1980s, 27.3% came prior to the 1980s. 74.2% of those entering the US before 1970 have become US citizens, 23.9% of those entering between 1980 and 1989 have become citizens, while only 6.7% of those entering between 1990 and 2000 have become US citizens. Hispanics have larger than average families. 30.6% have five or more members as compared to 11.8% for non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics are less likely to marry with 33.2% having never married compared to 24.5% of non-Hispanic whites. Cuban Americans are most likely to marry 79.6%. Hispanics receive less education; a staggering 27.3% did not go past 9th grade compared to 4.2% for non-Hispanic whites, while 15.7% went to high school but did not graduate more than double the 7.3% for non-Hispanic whites. Only 46.4% are high school graduates compared to 60.3% for non-Hispanic whites, and only 10.6% have a bachelors degree compared to 28.1% for non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics are two times more likely to be unemployed or to work in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. Hispanics are more likely also to be poor, 22.8% compared to 7.7% of non-Hispanic whites, 23.1% of all poor in the US are Hispanic and 30.3% of all Hispanic children are poor compared to 9.4% of all non-Hispanic whites, 29.0% of all poor children in the US are Hispanic. And while the entrepreneurial spirit is strong among Hispanic Americans, they own only 5.8% of all businesses in the US and earn a paltry 2.37% of all receipts.[7]



State	Percent of All Businesses Owned
California	13%
New York	6.9%
Texas	15.8%
Florida	14.9%
New Jersey	5.5%
Illinois	3.5%
Arizona	8.8%
New Mexico	21.5%

Figure 3.

A Chronology—1492-2001

During the period of exploration, in one generation approximately 300,000 Spaniards emigrated to the New World. They established over 200 cities and towns throughout the Americas. They explored and colonized from the southernmost tip of South America to the northernmost reaches of North America. They charted the oceans and the islands of the Caribbean; crisscrossed America by foot, raft, ship, horse; and in one generation Hispanics acquired more new territory than Rome conquered in five centuries! There have been Hispanics in the Americas since 1492. The Spanish and the Portuguese came to the New World in small ships such as those of Columbus.

1492—Columbus lands on Hispaniola.

1493—The Spanish Sovereigns grant the Admiral from Castile, Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus), the right to bear arms.

1499—the first Spanish Conquistadors arrive in the New World.

1499—Alonso de Ojeda explores Venezuelan coastline.

1500—João Fernandes explores Labrador.

1501—Rodrigo de Bastidas explores Central America Coast and Caribbean.

1508—Velasquez-Cortes-Ponce de Leon's conquest of Cuba.

1510—Settlements in Jamaica.

1517—1518—First Spanish effort to colonize mainland Mexico.

1518—Juan de Grijalva sails along the Mexican coast, from Cozumel to Cabo Roxo, collecting the first European impression of Mesoamerica.

1519-1522—Ferdinand Magellan completes voyage of circumnavigation. Click here for a picture of the Coat of Arms of Christopher Columbus, the first modern European to "discover" the Americas, bringing Spanish conquest to the New World.

1521—May 1521 Spaniards begin the siege of Tenochtitlan which lasts 75 days.

1524—Franciscan Monks arrive.

1528—King Carlos V establishes the first Audiencia in Nueva Espana-Tierra Nueva, to handle judicial and executive matters.

1531—Pizaro conquers Peru which is colonized by Spain.

1539—The first press is introduced in the North American Continent by the Spanish.

1539-1542—Hernando de Soto explores the lower south of the present day United States of America, travels inland across ten states, “discovers” the Mississippi River.

1540—Francisco Vasquez de Coronado explores California, Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. Click here for an image of Tenochtitlan.

1562—The Spanish conquerors and explorers created early maps. The Guiterrez Map is the earliest known map of California. Click here for a Spanish drawing of a hammock used by the natives of the Caribbean.

The Spanish and Portuguese found thriving civilizations in the New World. The Huejotizingo Codex documents the life of the Nahuatl (Aztec) people (mid-late 16th century). The Huejotizingo Codex showing the agricultural products of the Nahuatl. The Huejotizingo Codex showing a warehouse manifest or inventory. The Huejotizingo Codex may be a drawing of a textile embroidered with gold thread. The Huejotizingo Codex showing an inventory or possibly a tax list. An early drawing shows some of the various professions of the Tarascan people. Tarascan society was very similar to that of the Nahuatl although smaller. All complex civilizations in the New World were highly stratified. European conquest brought destruction and severe stratification to the civilizations of the Americas. The Inca civilization in Peru began to collapse soon after contact with Europeans.

1551—The First University on the North American continent established. The Real y Pontificia Universidad de Mexico, had the same privileges as the Universidad de Salamanca, had five facultades/schools. (The University of Salamanca, Spain, was the leading University in Europe of its time and is still a leading University).

1580-1640—Horses introduced to the American Southwest.

1602—Colony in New Mexico, San Gabriel del Yunque, soldiers and families abandoned the Colony in 1600, but some families remained, and a few additional colonizing families arrived in October 1602, some were the Bacas and the Montoyas. They resided at San Gabriel del Yunque prior to the founding of the Villa de Santa Fe in 1607.

1608—New Mexico made a Royal Province.

1610—Palace of the Governors built in Sante Fe[8], New Mexico (still stands and is in use!)

1702—English from Carolina besieged Castillo de San Marcos unsuccessfully, but razed St. Augustine, Florida.

1738—The Spanish build Fort Mose, for the African born slaves who escaped from the British.

1763—Spanish Florida ceded to England by the Treaty of Paris.

1776—The American War of Independence. The American Continental Army (under George Washington) and its allies the Spanish Army ultimately defeat the British.

1914— On April 20, Colorado miners, state militiamen and company guards began shooting directly at striking Hispanic workers’ tents setting them on fire. Of the 18 people killed, half were Mexican-Americans and many were children who had been burned to death. This was called the Ludlow Massacre.

1915—Arizona, striking Hispanic workers were forced to walk to Bisbee, where they were loaded onto cattle cars and taken across the state line where they were abandoned in the New Mexico desert without food or water.

1921—Immigration Act restricts the entry of Southern and Eastern Europeans. Efforts to include Mexicans in the restrictions are blocked by supporters of the agriculture business in the Southwest. “In response to growing public opinion against the flow of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe in the years following World War I, Congress passed first the Quota Act of 1921 then the even more restrictive Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act). Initially, the 1924 law imposed a total quota on immigration of 165,000—less than 20 percent of the pre-World War I average. It based ceilings on the number of immigrants from any particular nation on the percentage of each nationality recorded in the 1890 census—a blatant effort to limit immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, which mostly occurred after that date. In the first decade of the 20th century, an average of 200,000 Italians had entered the United States each year. With the 1924 Act, the annual quota for Italians was set at less than 4,000. This table shows the annual immigration quotas under the 1924 Immigration Act.”

1929—The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) formed to fight for the Civil Rights of Hispanics.

1943—The “Zoot Suit” Riots in East Los Angeles. (For more information about this topic, please visit the following websites: PBS: American Experience: The Zoot Suit Riots; Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots; The Zoot-Suit and Style Warfare).

1948—The American GI Forum (AGIF), a Hispanic veterans’ organization formed in order to help Hispanic WWII veterans who were being denied medical care by Veterans Hospitals.

1960s and 1970s—The Chicano Movement organized as Hispanics' Civil Rights continue to be violated. (See also: Chicano! A History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement; Latino Civil Rights Timeline, 1903 to present; National Council of La Raza.)

1968—Luis Alvarez won the Nobel Prize for his work with subatomic particles.

1995—Mario Molina, along with two other scientists, won the Nobel Prize in chemistry

The Bracero Program

The original agreement for the Bracero program was formalized the 23th of July, 1942. Months later, the agreement was modified. The final version was released on April 26, 1943. The original agreement was signed by representatives from both countries. From Mexico, Ernesto Hidalgo, representative of the Foreign Affairs Ministry and Abraham J. Navas, Esq., representative of the Ministry of Labor. From United States: Joseph F. McGurk, Counsel of the American Embassy in Mexico, John Walker, Deputy Administrator of the Farm Security Administration, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and David Mecker, Deputy Director of War Farming Operations also from the USDA. Mexican migrant workers being recruited for the Bracero Program in the 1940s and 1950s. (For more information, please visit the following websites: Mexican Immigrant Labor History; Bracero History Archive; Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero Program; Los Braceros: Mexican Labor Importation; Time Magazine: April 9, 1951: Immigration: The Wetbacks,)

Farmworkers and Migrant Labor

Cesar Chavez, was the founder of the http://www.ufw.org/(UFW) in1962. This labor union was begun in order to address many of the egregious practices of the farmers who hired migrant labor to pick their crops. Migrant labor keeps the prices of produce artificially low in the United States because they are seldom paid minimum wage and they aren't protected by Federal Wage and Hour Laws because the government is officially unaware of their presence. Migrant laborers are overwhelmingly from Mexico, they are young, and they are undereducated. In New York State, "farmworkers are excluded from New York State labor laws providing for: disability insurance, a day of rest, overtime pay, and collective bargaining."[9] According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "farmworkers brave extreme weather conditions and exposure to chemicals in their work.·33% of farmworkers live in moderate to severely substandard housing. About 33% of farmworkers pay more than 1/3 of their income for housing. Areas in the US with the most serious farmworker housing problems are Florida and the Northwest. The 52% crowding rate for farmworkers is 10 times the national average. 88% of farmworkers are estimated to be Hispanic; 45% have children."[10] Moreover, "Recent estimates by the U.S. Department of Labor suggest that approximately 1.3 million U.S. citizens migrate between states, earning their living by working in the agricultural industry. The outlook for these workers is bleak. Their education rates are much lower than the national average. Their health is undermined by hard outdoor labor and exposure to pesticides — Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration lists agriculture as the second most dangerous occupation in the United States. The Farmworker Health Services Program reports that the average life expectancy of a farmworker is substantially lower than the national life expectancy rate of the U.S. population. And, according to a 2000 survey by the Department of Labor, 61 percent of all farmworkers have incomes below the poverty level. For the past decade the median income of farmworker families has remained less than $10,000."[11] (For more information, please see the following websites: Trading on Migrant Labor; Imagining a United States without Immigrant Labor; Second Summit of the Americas: Migrant Workers; The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA); Migrant Farm Workers: Our Nation's Invisible Population; Farmworkers in the United States; Picture This: Depression Era: 1930s: Migrant Farm Workers.

Borders and Immigration

The Smithsonian's "Migration in History" exhibit states, "borders are artifacts of history and are subject to change over time. When borders shift, lands and peoples are subjected to different sets of rules; this creates opportunities for exploitation, conditions of hardship, and motivations for revolt."[12] The old and common saying "we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us" is true. For many northern Mexicans living on the now-American side of the Rio Grande, the border did indeed change. "With the advent of a nation-based quota system in 1924, many immigrants found themselves found themselves on the wrong side of a new law. Because of the quota system, it became illegal for many Mexicans to cross a border which was less than 80 years old".[13] For a timeline of a history of the US Mexico border, please visit The Border, a PBS online series.

Hispanics Today

In September 1996, ...Our Nation on the Fault Line . . . a report to the President of the United States, the Nation, and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education by the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for

Hispanic Americans found that “Educational attainment for most Hispanic Americans is in a state of crisis”. In 2010, the state of education for Hispanics Americans is still as grim and “. . . evidence exists that the isolation and segregation has had several detrimental effects. First, Hispanics have the highest dropout rate of any ethnic group in this country. One-half of all Mexican-American and Puerto Rican students do not graduate from high schools (National Council of La Raza, 1989).”[14] In a modern, post-industrial society where many jobs are in the so-called high tech sector, degrees beyond high school graduation are more important than ever. Thus, the huge dropout rate of Hispanic American children does not bode well for economic success in a nation where economic success is a core value. Furthermore, all of the scientific and demographic data consistently show that the less educated among us also do less well in terms of general health, and the less educated are more likely to engage in deviant behavior the consequences of which are often imprisonment or death at an early age. Therefore, our nation is **still** on the fault line in terms of our Hispanic American population.

Hispanic immigration is changing the face of America in profound and, for some, unexpected ways. “Toombs County, Georgia—a little town about 200 miles southeast of Atlanta—made national news when its local high school sponsored three senior proms instead of its usual two. Principal Ralph Hardy, who is black, insisted that racism is not a serious problem at his school and that segregated proms are a matter of taste: ‘Latinos, blacks, and whites all prefer their own music and food.’ A prime example of communities, mostly in the South, that have experienced unprecedented Hispanic population growth, Toombs instantiates the growing complexity of the long-standing struggle for racial integration as newcomers from Mexico, Central America, and South America alter the ethno-racial landscape, forcing multiculturalism in places previously colored black and white. Whether the Hispanicization of metropolitan America redraws spatial color lines in urban places long divided into black and white into three-way splits is an empirical question with far-reaching implications for social integration and civic engagement.”[15]The enormous influx of Hispanics into parts of mostly all-white or all black and white America is cause for concern among anti-immigration groups such as F.A.I.R.(Federation for Immigration Reform) in the US, but the racial/ethnic changes that are taking place are inevitable. Moreover, all data show that newcomers to American soil, while changing America are also changed by America and relatively rapidly assimilate into American society. According to a 2008 article in *USA Today*

“Immigrants in the USA number almost 40 million. About half are Latin American, an issue at the center of the debate over immigration reform and border enforcement. Tracking how well immigrants blend in — from owning homes to moving up the economic ladder — is a key part of the controversy.” “The level of assimilation typically drops during times of high immigration because there are more newcomers who are different from native-born Americans. It happened between 1900 and 1920, when the immigrant population grew 40% — a much slower rate than the recent wave. ” “Yet the rapid growth since 1990 has not caused as dramatic a decline in assimilation, [Jacob] Vigdor [of Duke University] says.” “Immigrants who arrived in the past 25 years have assimilated faster than their counterparts of a century ago, [Vigdor] says.”

And although “Mexican “immigrants experience very low rates of economic and civic assimilation” they experience “relatively normal rates of cultural assimilation.”[16]

In “Hypersegregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Black and Hispanic Segregation along Five Dimensions” by Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton, the authors argue that even though Hispanics are severely segregated, blacks are still the most segregated Americans. “A high level of segregation . . . is problematic because it isolates a minority group from amenities, opportunities, and resources that affect social and economic well-being”.[17]Hispanic segregation is “lower on any given dimension . . . [so that] Hispanics are moderately but consistently segregated . . . [but] never display both multidimensional layering and high segregation.”[18]In other words, although Hispanics do experience segregation it is not so egregious as that of African Americans.

“Hispanics are rapidly transforming the social and economic fabric of many small towns, where they have come to work—often at low wages—in food processing plants, agriculture, and construction. But to what extent have these Hispanics been incorporated into their new communities and local housing markets? In other words, do they share the same neighborhoods or live apart from non-Hispanic whites? ”

Measuring Residential Segregation

“Case studies of rural destination communities often provide a rather sketchy portrait of immigrant incorporation. Marshalltown, Iowa, a community of about 26,000 people, is a good example. Its Hispanic population grew from fewer than 300 to more than 3,500 between 1990 and 2000. But we understand little about how the local housing market has accommodated such an unprecedented influx of Hispanics or how they are incorporated into previously homogenous Anglo neighborhoods in Marshalltown, and other similarly affected communities. For rural immigrant communities working in the poultry industry in North Carolina, for example, employers sometimes provide temporary housing (trailers) to attract Hispanic immigrant workers. This practice effectively marginalizes new arrivals from the rest of the largely Anglo community.[19]”

(For more information about Hispanic Americans, please visit The Pew Hispanic Center.)

Footnotes

- 1http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/library/maps/strokeatlas/methods/racedef.htm
- 2http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/95-test/appb.html#Hispanic_Origin
- 3 http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Hispanic
- 4http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/files/Internet_Hispanic_in_US_2006.pdf
- 5http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0006.pdf
- 6http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/files/Internet_Hispanic_in_US_2006.pdf
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5078
- 9 Migrant Farmworkers in the United States
- 10 Facts About Farmworkers
- 11 Now with Bill Moyers. “Migrant Labor in the United States.”
- 12 Migrations in History: United States-Mexico Borderlands/Frontera
- 13 The Border Crossed Us
- 14 ERIC Identifier: ED316616. Publication Date: 1989-00-00. Author: Wells, Amy Stuart. Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education New York NY. Hispanic Education in America: Separate and Unequal. ERIC/CUE Digest No. 59.
- 15 Redrawing Spatial Color Lines: Hispanic Metropolitan Dispersal, Segregation, and Economic Opportunity. Mary J. Fischer and Marta Tienda.
- 16 Civic Report No. 53 May 2008. “Measuring Immigrant Assimilation in the United States.” by Jacob L. Vigdor. http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_53.htm.
- 17 Hypersegregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Black and Hispanic Segregation along Five Dimensions. Author(s): Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton. *Demography*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Aug., 1989), pp. 373-391. Stable URL: www.jstor.org/stable/2061599.
- 18 Hypersegregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Black and Hispanic Segregation along Five Dimensions. Author(s): Douglas S. Massey and Nancy A. Denton. *Demography*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Aug., 1989), pp. 373-391. Stable URL: www.jstor.org/stable/2061599.
- 19 Hispanic Segregation in America's New Rural Boomtowns by Domenico Parisi and Daniel T. Lichter.

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9.8.3: Course Objectives for Part I

Suggested Course Objectives for Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to:

- Read about, find, identify, interpret, understand, explain, critique, define, present factually and persuasively, and write about and/or discuss dominant and minority groups and differentiate between them.
- Read about, find, identify, interpret, understand, explain, critique, define, present factually and persuasively, and write about and/or discuss prejudice and discrimination and the various forms they take.
- Read about, find, identify, interpret, understand, explain, critique, define, present factually and persuasively, and write about and/or discuss immigration, immigration theories, and the ongoing national debate concerning immigration.
- Find, interpret, understand, analyze, critique, and write about and/or discuss statistical and historical information concerning race relations in the past and present in the US.
- Understand, analyze, critique, and write about and/or discuss popular media's interpretation of stratification/inequality by race and ethnicity.
- Find, read, interpret, understand, analyze, critique, and write about and/or discuss immigration law and immigration studies found in peer reviewed scientific journal articles.
- Find and interpret demographic data about immigration from the US Census and other valid and reliable sources.
- Understand, analyze, critique, and write about and/or discuss popular media's interpretation of immigration and immigration policy.
- Find, interpret, understand, analyze, critique, and write about and/or discuss Congressional policies concerning immigration and immigrants in the US.

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9.8.4: Study Guide for Part I

Study Guide for Part I

- Be able to define and discuss stratification/inequalityStratification
  - The unequal distribution of the goods of society
    - Wealth, power, status
  - Social inequality
    - A system in which people are denied access to the goods of society based on their group membership
- Define, discuss, and give examples of master statusReview master statusRace or ethnicity, sex or gender, age, religion, disability, and SESSES
  - Socioeconomic Status= income+education+occupation
- Define and discuss SES
  - What is SES and how does it impact peoples' lives?
- The stratification hierarchy
  - Where someone is placed in terms of access to wealth, power, and status
  - Based on various aspects of their master status
  - How does the stratification hierarchy affect
    - Racial and ethnic minorities?
    - Women?
    - Sexual orientation minorities?
    - Religious minorities?
    - The disabled?
- Define Thomas's Theorem and explain how it relates to issues of stratification/inequality
  - How do our concepts of reality affect the way we judge others?
  - Discuss the ways in which the human mind creates social categories
  - Define and discuss stereotypes
    - How many stereotypes about groups other than your own can you list?
      - Are any of these stereotypes true?
      - Why or why not?
    - How many stereotypes about your own group can you list?
      - Are any of these stereotypes true?
      - Why or why not?
- Define and describe social differentiation
- Explain and give examples of social positions
  - Rankings of roles and statuses
- Explain and give examples of social mobility
  - What is the social mobility in your family?
- Define and discuss the various dimensions of and theories of stratification/inequality
  - Marx
    - Bourgeoisie and Proletariat
    - Based on the economic system
  - Weber
    - The bureaucracy
    - Wealth
      - A person's total economic access
      - Give an example

        - Power
            - The ability to influence over resistance
            - Give an example
        - Status
            - The esteem that society gives to social statuses and social roles
            - Give an example
    - Models of power
        - C. Wright Mills: *The Power Elite*
            - Power is held at the top of society by a handful of people
            - Give an example
        - Robert Dahl: Pluralistic model
            - Power is relatively evenly distributed
            - Give an example
        - Which model is correct?
            - Why?
    - The Davis-Moore Debate
        - What are the main points of Davis-Moore's argument?
        - Why do they say that stratification is functional for society?
        - Do you agree?
            - Why or why not?
    - Melvin Tumin's response to Davis-Moore
        - What are the main points of Tumin's argument?
        - Why does he disagree with Davis-Moore?
        - Do you agree with Tumin?
            - Why or why not?
- Be able to discuss the following dimensions of and theories of stratification/inequality
    - E. Digby Baltzell: WASP
        - Who are the WASPs?
        - Are they still "in charge"
    - Thorstein Veblen
        - Conspicuous Leisure
            - Give three modern examples
            - Look on *Forbes*
        - Conspicuous Consumption
            - Give three modern examples
            - Look on *Forbes*
    - Oscar LewisCulture of poverty
        - What are the main characteristics of the culture of poverty?
        - Is the culture of poverty real?
            - Why or why not?
    - Charles Murray*Losing Ground* and *The Bell Curve*
        - What are Murray's primary arguments?
        - Do you agree or disagree?
            - Why?
    - William Julius Wilson
        - The Truly Disadvantaged

        - When Work Disappears
        - Hyperghettoization
            - What are WJ Wilson's major arguments?
            - What data sources does he use?
            - Do you agree with his conclusions?
                - Why or why not?
    - Herbert Gans
        - The functionality of poverty
        - The War against the Poor
            - What are Gans's primary points of argument?
            - What are his data sources?
            - Do you agree with his conclusions?
                - Why or why not?
- Wealth
    - The billionaire's club
        - Who are the richest people in the world and how rich are they?
        - What are the most expensive consumer items in the world and who buys them?
            - Use the Internet to look at *Forbes Magazine's* lists
            - Use the Internet to find census data
    - What are the richest countries in the world and how does the US compare?Use the Internet to find data
        - The CIA World Factbook
        - The G8
    - What are the richest companies in the world and how do they compare to the economies of countries?
        - *Forbes Magazine's* lists
        - Use the Internet to find data
- Find and explain data about the demographics of poverty in the US
    - Poverty thresholds
- Find and explain data about the feminization of poverty
    - *The Statistical Abstract of the United States*
    - Use the Internet to find data about women and poverty
- Find information about and explain public policies and poverty programs
    - Find and explain data about poverty legislation
        - Georgetown Law Library
        - *The Congressional Record*
    - Use these sites (*The Statistical Abstract of the United States*; ACORN Housing) to find and explain data about inequality in:
        - Housing
        - Health care
        - Home ownership
        - Business ownership
        - Educational attainment
        - Labor force participation
- Find data about the minimum wage vs. the living wage
    - What is the minimum wage?
    - What are the criteria used to determine what the minimum wage will be?
    - Find information about the history of the minimum wage and explain how it relates to the cost of living
        - Minimum wage historical chart
        - Minimum wages by state

        - US Department of Labor Minimum Wage Page
    - Find information about the living wage; explain what it is and its ramifications for society
        - The Living Wage Resource Center
        - The Economic Policy Institute
        - Living Wage Calculator
        - What is a living wage?
        - How would a living wage impact the US economy?
- Look at the World Demographic "Clock" and explain what it shows
    - What did you learn from this that you did not know before?
- Explain the US and World Population "Clocks"
- Find data that break down world demographics into percentages."If the World Were a Village of 100 People."
    - If the World Were a Village of 100 People
    - If the World Were a Village of 100 People (2)
    - If the World Were a Village of 100 People (YouTube video)
- Define, discuss, and give examples of Infant Mortality Rates, Literacy Rates, Life Expectancy, and GDP/GNP in the richest and poorest nations in the world
    - The World Health Organization
    - The United Nations
- How do most people perceive World Inequality?
    - Why?
    - What information is available about world inequality to most people?
- Identify the levels into which the world is stratified and what those levels mean in terms of life chances
    - United Nations Summit on World Poverty
    - First, Second, Third, and Fourth Worlds
- Define and give examples of:
    - First World countries
    - Second World countries
    - Third World countries
    - Fourth World countries
- Find data about and discuss carrying capacity and world hunger
    - Define carrying capacity
    - In the late spring of 2008, there have been food riots in some parts of the world and food prices in some parts of the world have reached an all-time high
        - Find data that explain this
    - United Nations Summit on World Hunger
- Discuss the health concerns of First, Second, and Third World countries
    - What are their health concerns?
    - Who does and does not have access to health care?
    - Where does the US rank in terms of access to and quality of health care in the world?
    - United Nations: Economic and Social Development
    - The World Health Organization
- Find and explain data about the HIV/AIDS epidemic and how it impacts world poverty
    - UNAIDS: Joint United Programme on HIV/AIDS
    - Human Rights Watch: AIDS
    - World Health Organization: AIDS Day Message
    - The World Bank: HIV/AIDS in Africa
- Identify and differentiate among the various theories of inequality in the world
    - Conquest

- Migration
- Colonialism and Empire
- Neo-Colonialism
- World Systems Theory
- Modernization Theory
- Globalization and Glocalization
  - George Ritzer's McDonaldization theory.
  - Thomas Friedman's "Flat World" theory.

- Find and explain statistical information concerning world stratification/inequality including such statistical referents as Infant Mortality Rates, Literacy Rates, Life Expectancy, and GDP or GNP.
  - The CIA World Factbook
- Find and explain data about the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and the ways in which their policies impact global inequality.
  - The World Bank
  - The International Monetary Fund

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9.8.5: Key Terms and Concepts for Part I

Suggested Key Terms and Concepts for Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

"The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line"

"You've Got To Be Carefully Taught"

Apartheid

Ascribed master status

Assimilation

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

Categorical ideas

Civil Rights Act

Cognitive dissonance

Consequences of racism

Cultural assimilation

De facto discrimination

De jure discrimination…

Direct personal discrimination

Discrimination

Discrimination is a behavior

Dominant group

Dred Scott Decision

Dworkin and Dworkin

Erving Goffman

Essential characteristics of groups

Ethnicity

Ethnocentrism

Ethnophaulisms

Expulsion

Fair Housing Act

First generation Americans

Genocide

Gordon W. Allport

Hispanics/Latinos

Immigrants

Immigration

Immigration Act

Indirect institutional discrimination

Japanese-American relocation

Jim Crow laws

Korematsu Decision

Laws of association

Literacy tests

Majority status is unmarked or unstigmatized

Mccarran-Walter Act

Mental categories

Minority group

Minority status

Minority-Majority

Patterns of primary and secondary structural assimilation

Plessy v. Ferguson

Pogroms

Poll taxes

Power

Prejudice

Primary structural assimilation

Race

Racism

Robert Merton's Typology of Bigotry (Prejudice and Discrimination)

Rosenblum and Travis

Second generation Americans

Secondary structural assimilation

Social construct

Species

Stereotypes

Stigmatized

Structural discrimination

Third generation Americans

Thomas's Theorem

Traditional American assimilation pattern

Trail of Tears

Tribal stigma

Voting Rights Act

W.E.B. DuBois

White ethnics

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9.8.6: Lecture Outline for Part I

Suggested Lecture Material for Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

- Review Master Status.
- Definitions, discussion, and examples of dominant group and dominant group status.
  - Discuss and give examples of white privilege.
- Definitions, discussion, and examples of minority groups and minority group status.
  - Discuss and give examples of bigotry against minority groups.
- Use the Internet to display population data about racial and ethnic groups in the US.
  - Historical and current.
- Immigration
  - Define immigration.
  - Define emigration.
  - Define and discuss push factors.
  - Define and discuss pull factors.
- Assimilation.
  - Define and discuss cultural assimilation.
  - Define and discuss structural assimilation.
    - Primary
    - Secondary
- Identify and discuss models of assimilation.
  - Standard Model.
  - Pluralistic Model.
- Use the Internet to display statistical information concerning immigration into the US.
  - Historical data.
  - Current data.
  - Future data.
    - What is the projected population of each racial and ethnic group?
- Identify and differentiate among the various theories of race and ethnicity.
  - Conquest
  - Migration
  - Colonialism and Empire
  - Middle-man minorities
  - Merton's Typology of Bigotry

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9.8.7: Assignments for Part I

Suggested Assignments for Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

Find on the Internet: Immigration laws past and present.

Find on the Internet: Information about naturalization laws and procedures.

Find on the Internet: Population data about the various racial and ethnic groups identified by the US Census Bureau.

Find on the Internet: Statistical data about race and ethnicity and the law.

Find on the Internet: Statistical data about undocumented immigrants.

Find on the Internet: US Census Bureau data about housing, health care, home ownership, business ownership, educational attainment, and labor force participation of each of the racial and ethnic groups in the US.

Find on the Internet: US Census Bureau data about the number of immigrants who come to the US each year and their countries of origin.

In-Class Discussion: Discuss the "rightness" of the way race and ethnicity were addressed in the Constitution *and the* Declaration of Independence.

In-Class Discussion: How do we account for the racial and ethnic differences in housing, health care, home ownership, business ownership, educational attainment, labor force participation of each of the racial and ethnic groups in the US.

In-Class Discussion: Identify examples of bigotry and prejudice against immigrants.

In-Class Discussion: Identify examples of bigotry and prejudice.

In-Class Discussion: Identify examples of prejudice and discrimination in the Constitution *and in the* Declaration of Independence.

In-Class Discussion: Identify examples of white privilege.

In-Class Discussion: Is the US a melting pot, a lumpy stew, a tossed salad? Are we an assimilationist/assimilated society or a pluralistic society? What should we be?

In-Class Discussion: Read aloud from WPA slave narratives and discuss the similarities and differences among them.

In-Class Discussion: Should English be the "official" language of the United States?

In-Class Discussion: Should the United States change its immigration policies?

Read: The Constitution of the United States of America.

Read: The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen United States of America.

Read: The Declining Significance of Race *by William Julius Wilson.*

Read: Three to five peer reviewed articles about illegal immigration.

Read: Three to five peer reviewed articles about immigration by Alejandro Portes.

Read: Three to five peer reviewed articles about legal immigration.

Read: Three to five popular media articles about illegal immigration.

Read: Three to five popular media articles about legal immigration.

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9.8.8: Reading List for Part I

Reading List for Part I—Dominant and Minority Groups

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9.9: Defending against Surveillance and Suppression

What You'll Learn

1. What threat modeling is
2. Strategies for reducing threats to your digital security

You may hear that there is no such thing as perfect digital security, and we agree. The surveillance capabilities of a well-resourced adversary are nearly limitless, and those that we described in "Digital Threats to Social Movements" barely scratch the surface. However, not all risks are equal, not all surveillance tools are equally likely to be used, and there is a lot that an individual and a group can do to reduce the threats due to surveillance.

We can model a digital security threat in terms of the following relationship:

$$\text{threat} \propto \frac{(\text{surveillance capabilities}) \times (\text{suppression risk})}{\text{effort required to obtain data}}$$

In this model, **surveillance capabilities** refers to your opponent's level of resources, as discussed in the chapter "Digital Threats to Social Movements." **Suppression risk** refers to the ways in which your opponent may try to undermine you, as discussed in the chapter "Mechanisms of Social Movement Suppression."

It is important to keep in mind that surveillance supports suppression both indirectly and directly. Many of the examples we gave in the chapter "Mechanisms of Social Movement Suppression" were indeed supported by surveillance:

- The **direct violence** meted out on Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton through a targeted assassination was supported by detailed knowledge of his schedule and apartment layout.
- The US Department of Justice issued threats of sanction through the **legal system** against those individuals organizing the protests of Donald Trump's inauguration and requested to obtain all website traffic information of an organizing web page (described at the end of the chapter "Anonymous Routing").
- Steven Salaita's **employment deprivation** was a result of the monitoring of his Twitter activity.
- The **deception** used by the FBI against Mohamed Mohamud began with the monitoring of Mohamud's email.

Reducing the Threat

We can reduce digital security threats by *decreasing* surveillance capabilities or suppression risk or by *increasing* the effort required to obtain one's data.

Reducing Surveillance Capabilities

Most activists have little immediate control over surveillance capabilities. However, there are a number of laudable efforts to regulate surveillance with some success, such as the banning of face recognition and CSS in certain jurisdictions. But unless your social movement work is aimed at trying to ban or limit surveillance, going down this route would take you away from your goals.

Reducing Suppression Risk

Likewise, activists have little control over suppression risk. You could minimize the risk of suppression by reducing the threat to your opponent, but then you would be succumbing to the chilling effect.

Increasing the Effort Required to Obtain Your Data

That leaves us with increasing the effort required to obtain your data, which is the focus of the remainder of this book. While protecting all data is important (the more your opponent knows about you, the better they can undermine you), we encourage putting any additional effort in protecting your data toward the most protective strategies. So to *guide* that effort, you should keep in mind the surveillance capabilities of your opponents and their likely modes of suppressing your efforts. To this end, focus on protecting data that

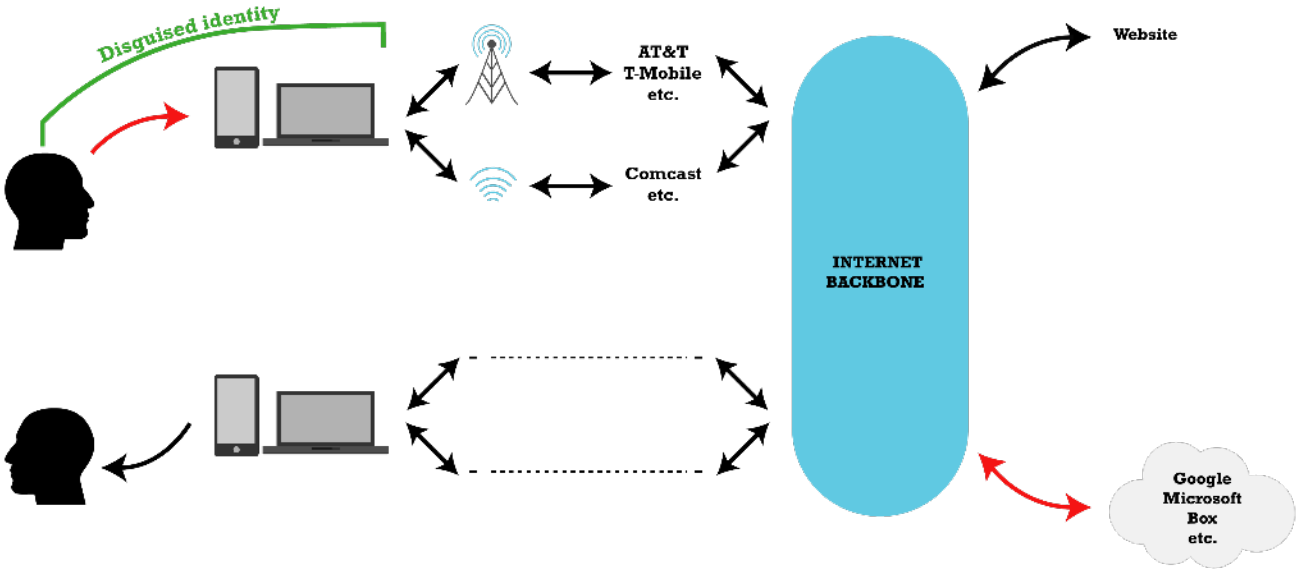
1. could most likely be used to suppress your efforts and
2. is most vulnerable to surveillance.

Understanding point 1 will be through a deep understanding of the efforts and opponents of a given social movement. To consider point 2, we need to understand where your data is (described below) and how to protect it (which will be discussed in the remaining

chapters of this book).

Where Is Your Data?

We take different protective strategies depending on where data is vulnerable. Your information becomes data when it is put on a device (e.g., a cell phone or laptop) and then may be transmitted through the internet via service providers. We distinguish here between websites where you may be browsing or cloud providers where your data may be held (from Google to Facebook).



Where your data is

In the remaining chapters, we discuss how to protect where your data is. In the chapter "Security Culture," we discuss how to decide whether your information becomes data (when you have control over it) and whether to store your data in the cloud—that is, whether you want your data to transmit over the red arrows. In the chapter "Protecting Your Devices," we discuss how to protect data that is held on devices that you have control over (e.g., your laptop and cell phone). In the chapter "Protecting Your Communications," we discuss how to protect your data while it transmits from you to your destination, be that a website, cloud provider, or another person. In the chapter "Protecting Your Remote Data," we discuss how to protect data that is held in the cloud if you have made the decision to do so.

We then discuss how to protect your identity—that is, how to be anonymous or pseudonymous online and break through censorship—in the chapter "Protecting Your Identity." Finally, we discuss how to select digital security tools in the conclusion and give the principles we use for our recommendations.

In Context: Edward Snowden

In the years leading up to 2013, Edward Snowden collected data from his workplaces (mostly NSA subcontractors) that he had access to in his role as a systems administrator. Snowden's leaks of troves of classified material illustrated just how advanced and broadly deployed the surveillance tactics of many of the world's most powerful governments were. However, in order to make these disclosures, Snowden was up against a powerful adversary: the National Security Agency itself.

Snowden was unlikely to achieve long-term anonymity—his goal was to keep his behaviors (collecting information) and goal (whistleblowing) unknown for long enough to leak the information to journalists, who would responsibly report on it, and hopefully long enough to get to a safe haven, where he could live in freedom. It took months for Snowden to set up an encrypted communications channel with Glenn Greenwald (a journalist known for fearless, deep reporting), this being in the days before "plug-and-play" end-to-end encrypted messaging apps. But once the reporting on Snowden's disclosures started, he knew his identity would be discovered and unmasked himself. Snowden didn't end up where he had hoped (Latin America). His US passport was canceled during his flight from Hong Kong (where he disclosed his leads to Glenn Greenwald) to Russia, preventing him from further air travel. Snowden was able to claim asylum in Russia.

However, Snowden was very successful in his whistleblowing, with the reporting lasting for years after and with numerous changes to our communications: encryption is more commonly available now, so much so that many people don't even know when their conversations are end-to-end encrypted.

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10.1: Select a social problem

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10.1.1: Interventions and Problem Solving

Social issues impair social functioning and negatively impact the lives of individuals, groups, and organizations (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). People effected by a particular social issue may face a variety of obstacles and challenges associated with the problem including labeling, stigma, discrimination, and isolation. Sociological practitioners work to address the problem by changing the social setting, arrangement, norms, and behaviors surrounding the issue and the people involved. A sociological practitioner may serve as the facilitator of this social change, a broker by acting on the behalf of others for change, or a clinician by providing direct services or help to change the situation of individuals and families.

There are six approaches most commonly used by sociological and other professional practitioners, communities, and clients to address social problems and create change. To resolve or improve situations, different problems require different approaches based on the client needs and social resources available to them. Each sociological approach incorporates a different level of analysis to assess the problem with a specific focal area of intervention. When social change requires different levels of analysis, sociological approaches must identify and explore multiple solutions across continuums. Not all approaches result in an expeditious solution. Sociological approaches and interventions take planning and time to implement and can take years to gain permanent change or improve people's lives.

Process of Intervention

Regardless of approach, sociologists follow an incremental process of intervention to remedy a social problem. Each sociological approach includes a **process of intervention** that includes an assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation phase. There are no timelines of completion defined within each phase. Rather the sociological practitioner, clients, and other impacted individuals or groups set deadlines and completion parameters based on context and need.

The first phase examines the social problem and needs of those it impairs. This is an investigative stage to gather information and understand the situation to define the problem (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). A sociological practitioner must first identify the presenting problem and client(s). The presenting problem refers to the client's perspective of the problem as they see it in their own words (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). The **assessment** is a discovery phase of the history and evolution of the problem within the geographic region to find out who is seeking help and why. The assessment also helps determine the role or involvement of the sociological practitioner in the intervention.

An assessment is a case study guided by the nature of the problem and clients (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Data collection may include interviews, focus groups, surveys, and secondary analysis (e.g., analytic data, educational records, criminal records, medical files, etc.). Findings and results are presented and discussed with clients and other involved parties to formulate solutions and objectives of intervention.



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The next stage in the process is to plan the steps for achieving intervention objectives. The **plan** is a formal (written) agreement among interventionists (including the sociological practitioner) and client(s) outlining the objectives and roles and responsibilities of each person involved. The plan will include observable, measurable objectives that include: 1) subject and verb stating the

condition to achieve, 2) amount or percentage of reduction or improvement of the condition, and 3) timeframe or deadline for completion (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Both process and outcome objectives must be delineated in the plan. **Process objectives** will focus on program operations or services, and **outcome objectives** concentrate on the results of the intervention against **baseline data** (i.e., data collected prior to intervention). Interventionists and clients work together to develop a plan so everyone has an equal voice and understanding of their duties, obligations, and work to complete in the implementation phase.

> Consider a social problem you would like to address in your community. Conduct secondary analysis of the issue to identify the presenting problem, clientele, and existing community services. Explore nonprofit and public agencies in your community working on the problem you chose to help you gather information.
>
> After completing your analysis, draft four observable, measurable objectives of intervention for the problem and population you wish to address. Two objectives must focus on process and two on outcomes. All outcomes must include a verb and subject stating the condition to achieve, amount or percentage of reduction or improvement of the condition, and timeframe or deadline for completion.

The third phase in the process centers on implementation. In this stage, the plan commences according to the steps outlined in the formal agreement. **Implementation** puts the plan into action by following the proposed sequence and schedule. This phase engages strategies in order to accomplish objectives. For example, solving chronic poverty in your community might require employing several strategies such as improving K-12 education, increasing higher education enrollments and job skills training, providing access to health care, and developing employment opportunities. During the implementation phase, interventionists and collaborators will initiate and work on each strategy for change.

The final phase in the process of intervention is evaluation. Sociologists use **evaluation** to find out if a program, service, or intervention works (Steele and Price 2008). There are two types of evaluation. A process or **formative evaluation** gathers information to help improve or change a program, service, or intervention. Did everything occur and work according to plan? Sociological practitioners work with clients to determine program strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement to strengthen or adapt the program (Steele and Price 2008). An outcome or **summative evaluation** measures the impact of the program, service, or intervention on clients or participants. Were benchmarks achieved or changes made? Practitioners measure changes in clients over the duration of their participation from start to completion. The impact evaluation determines if change occurred, any unintended outcomes, and the long-term effects.



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Evaluation is an ongoing task tracking program progress from beginning to end (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Interventionists and practitioners must monitor the program continuously to ensure the service or intervention is advancing toward change, and adjustments or alternatives are deployed to increase effectiveness in a timely manner. The goal of evaluation is to know why a program, service, or intervention succeeded or failed to reform or adapt present and future support and solutions. Evaluation is a mechanism of **continual improvement** by regularly providing information and identifying unintended consequences.

Evaluation requires both quantitative and qualitative data (see page 5) using a variety of data collection methods and tools to gather information (e.g., tests, questionnaires, archival data, etc.). Data collection tools vary from program to program, sometimes tools exist to conduct an evaluation, and other times practitioners must develop them (Viola and McMahon 2010). Practitioners lead in

the development of data collection protocols, tools, and instruments for review by participants (e.g., clients and community members) before they are ready to use.

As a contributing member of an evaluation team, sociological practitioners (see page 3) must be aware of **role-conflict**. It is imperative to avoid role-conflict in a participatory evaluation model. In other words, practitioners must be aware of their role within the evaluative context or situation as to whether one is serving as a researcher, practitioner, or interventionist (i.e., clinical sociologist). It is difficult to implement the scientific method (process and procedures) in the field within the standards of academic research when serving as a practitioner (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Sociological practitioners or interventionists do not always have control over the evaluation research, study environment, or time to complete an evaluative study as prescribed by the scientific method.

The Workforce Internship Networking (WIN) Center at West Hill College Lemoore in California connects and supports students and alumni by providing employment, occupational readiness, and job placement information and resources to advance personal career goals. The WIN Center provides a space for employers and students to connect. At the WIN Center, students and alumni receive skills training, employment and internship application assistance, and support in creating a professional profile.

1. Describe why it might be important to evaluate the WIN Center.
2. Considering the importance of evaluating college campus programs, how often would you recommend evaluating the WIN Center's programs and services? What should the evaluation examine?
3. What role could program monitoring play in the overall evaluation of the WIN Center?
4. If you were responsible for overseeing program monitoring and the evaluation of the WIN Center, what data would you collect to assess its impact?

In addition, evaluations may cause tension between practitioners (interventionists) and evaluation associates. Interventionists are responsible for providing data and keeping records while implementing program activities. Conflicting demands for an interventionists' time and energy during the program implementation process may lead to a delay in gathering and sharing data with evaluators. Evaluation is not always equally valued, and some interventionists may consider evaluation unimportant or a threat to their work or process resulting in uncooperative behavior or interest.

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10.1.2: Problem Solving Approaches and Interventions

There are six problem solving approaches and interventions most commonly used among practitioners. Each approach examines a different aspect of a social problem. The nature of the problem and people involved determines the most appropriate intervention to apply.

A **social systems approach** examines the social structure surrounding the problem or issue. This approach requires macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis (see pages 12-13) to help understand the structure of the problem and the arrangement of individuals and social groups involved. Analysis requires comprehension of the entire issue and parts associated, as well as, which components and protocols of the structure are independent or dependent of each other. Application of this approach requires grasp of the complete problem including the hierarchy, order, patterns, and boundaries of individuals and social groups including their interactions, relationships, and processes as a body or structure surrounding the issue (Bruhn and Rebach 2007).



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The interventions deployed using a social systems approach focus on establishing and maintaining stability for all parties even while change is occurring. Social system interventions require change agents or leaders such as sociological practitioners to help control and guide inputs (what is put in or taken into the problem) and outputs (what is produced, delivered, or supplied resulting from change) used in problem solving (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). This approach requires the involvement of everyone in the social structure to design or re-design the system and processes around the issue.

The **human ecology approach** examines the “web of life” or the ecosystem of a social problem or issue. This approach is often visually represented by a spider web to demonstrate how lives are interlinked and interdependent. A human ecology approach focuses on macro and meso levels of analysis to develop knowledge about the social bonds, personal needs, and environmental conditions that impede or support life challenges and opportunities for individuals. Practitioners evaluate and analyze where individuals and groups fit in the social structure or ecosystem and their roles. The purpose of this approach is to identify cognitive and emotional boundaries people experience living in social systems to help confront and remove the obstacles they face.



This image "Arachnid Artistic Blur Bokeh" by Pixabay is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Interventions applied in a human ecological approach target changes in families, institutions, and small communities. The goal is to confront the stressors and strain created by social situations and settings. Interventions from a human ecology approach help people determine acceptable behaviors within different social environments (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Practitioners work with social groups to remove collaborative challenges between groups in a social ecosystem and the individuals working and living within them. Change is concentrated on developing a new system and process to support and remove obstacles for individuals effected by a social problem.

1. Describe the **social systems** approach and explain what type of social problems or issues this approach is the most valid method to use.
2. Describe the **human ecology** approach and explain what type of social problem or issues this approach is the most valid method to use.
3. Which approach is the most appropriate for assessing and addressing the social conditions listed below. Use supporting evidence to justify your analysis.
    a. A county mental health court
    b. Gender neutral bathrooms on a college campus
    c. Anti-bullying campaign in local K-12 schools

A **life cycle approach** examines the developmental stages and experiences of individuals facing issues or various life crises. Meso and micro levels of analysis are required with this method. Data gathered assists practitioners in understanding the adaption of individuals or groups to change, challenges, and demands at each developmental stage of life (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Analysis incorporates evaluation of interpersonal connections between a person and the environment, life transitions, and patterns. This approach if applicable when working with individuals, groups, and organizations, which all have and go through a life cycle and stages of development.

Interventions using this approach target changes in social norms and expectations of individuals or groups facing difficulties. Practitioners help identify the context and issues creating anxiety among individuals or groups and facilitate coping strategies to attack their issues. This approach builds on positive personal and social resources and networks to mend, retrain, or enable development and growth.



This image "Black and White Blood Pressure Kit" by Pixabay is licensed under CC BY 4.0

The **clinical approach** evaluates disease, illness, and distress. Both meso and micro levels of analysis are required for this method. Practitioners assess biological, personal, and environmental connections by surveying the patient or client's background, and current and recent conditions (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). A Patient Evaluation Grid (PEG) is the most commonly used tool for data collection. This approach requires in-depth interactions with the patient or client to identify themes associated with their condition and the structure of the social system related to their illness and support. When applying this approach in medical practice, the evaluation and analysis leads to a diagnosis.

1. Describe the **life cycle** approach and explain what type of social problems or issues this approach is the most valid method to use.
2. Describe the **clinical** approach and explain what type of social problem or issues this approach is the most valid method to use.
3. Which approach is the most appropriate for assessing and addressing the social issues listed below. Use supporting evidence to justify your analysis.
    a. Policing strategies to reduce crime and improve community relationships
    b. Reductions in self-injury or cutting among teens
    c. A community college social work education degree program

Intervention in a clinical approach concentrates on removal of symptoms, condition, or changes in the individual to solve the problem. The overarching goal of this method is to prevent the problem from reoccurring and the solution from interfering with the individual's functioning. Problem management must minimally disrupt the social system of the patient or client.

A **social norms approach** focuses on peer influences to provide individuals with accurate information and role models to induce change (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). This approach observes macro, meso, and micro levels of analysis. Intervention centers on providing correct perceptions about thinking and behavior to induce change in one's thoughts and actions. This technique is a proactive prevention model aimed at addressing something from happening or arising.

There are three levels of intervention when applying a social norms approach (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Practitioners use interventions independently or together for a comprehensive solution. At the **universal level of intervention**, all members of a population receive the intervention without identifying which individuals are at risk. A **selective level of intervention** directs assistance or services to an entire group of at risk individuals. When specific individuals are beyond risk and already show signs of the problem, they receive an **indicated level of intervention**. A **comprehensive intervention** requires an integration of all three levels.

Practitioners assist communities in problem solving by applying a **community based approach**. All three levels of analysis (macro, meso, and micro) are required for this method. The aim of this approach is to plan, develop, and implement community based interventions whereby local institutions and residents participate in problem solving and work towards preventing future issues. Practitioners work with communities on three outcomes, individual empowerment, connecting people, and improving social interactions and cooperation (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Concentrating on these outcomes builds on community assets while tailoring solutions to local political, economic, and social conditions. By building bridges among individuals and groups in the

community, practitioners facilitate connections between services, programs, and policies while attacking the problem from multiple vantage points.



This image "Two Women in White Hijab Veils" by mentatdgt is licensed under CC BY 4.0

A community based approach helps ensure problem analysis, evaluation, and interventions are culturally and geographically appropriate for local residents, groups, and organizations. To operate effectively, this intervention requires practitioners to help facilitate face-to-face interactions among community members and develop a communication pattern for solving community problems. To build an appropriate intervention, practitioners must develop knowledge and understanding about the purpose, structure, and process of each group, organization, and collaboration within the community (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Upon implementation, a community based approach endows local residents and organizations to observe and monitor their own progress and solutions directly.

1. Describe the **social norms** approach and explain what type of social problems or issues this approach is the most valid method to use.
2. Describe the **community based** approach and explain what type of social problem or issues this approach is the most valid method to use.
3. Which approach is the most appropriate for assessing and addressing the social problems listed below. Use supporting evidence to justify your analysis.
    a. Human trafficking prevention program
    b. Reductions in electronic cigarette, vaping, and new tobacco product usage

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10.1.3: Commonalities of Approaches

There are four common themes among problem solving approaches. All approaches focus on creating change. Interventionists work towards changing behavior or the social arrangements of clients. The goal is to improve social functioning of individuals, groups, communities, and organizations.

Table 5. Problem Solving Interventions. Attribution: Copyright Vera Kennedy, West Hills College Lemoore, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

Problem Solving Approach	Intervention Focus
Social Systems	Create stability of the social arrangement or social structure
Human Ecology	Identify social location of individuals (place or position in society) to tackle and remove obstacles
Lifecycle	Build resources and networks to mend, retrain, or enable development and growth
Clinical	Remove symptoms or condition and help support change
Social Norms	Proactive prevention through modeling behavior
Community Based	Train and empower local residents and organizations to solve their problems

Each approach begins with a judicious problem assessment. Identifying and investigating the presenting problem is critical to understanding and framing the needs of clients. The assessment stage allows interventionists to formulate a theory and construct an operational definition of what is to be changed (Bruhn and Reach 2007). This stage initiates the intervention planning process.

Many social problems have common causes and solutions so a multidimensional approach to problem solving alleviates many symptoms but can also cause new ones to surface. According to Lindblom and Cohen (1979), solving one social problem often creates new problems or solves others. Because social problems are multidimensional touched by multiple factors and social arrangements, all approaches incorporate multi-factor and multilevel problem solving interventions examining micro (individual) and meso or macro (collective) needs of clients. This means all approaches involve more than one level of intervention.

Lastly, all approaches include client follow-up and an evaluation of program and services. These activities serve as a feedback mechanism for determining successes, failures, and areas for improvement (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Evaluation data is used for developing programs and providing accountability among practitioners and clients.

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10.1.4: References, Key Terms and Concepts

Bruhn, John G. and Howard M. Rebach. 2007. *Sociological Practice: Intervention and Social Change*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Springer.

Lindblom, Charles E. and David K. Cohen. 1979. *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving*. New Have: Yale University Press.

Steele, Stephen F. and Jammie Price. 2008. *Applied Sociology: Terms, Topics, Tools, and Tasks*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Viola, Judah J. and Susan Dvorak McMahon. 2010. *Consulting and Evaluation with Nonprofit and Community-based Organizations*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

Key Terms and Concepts

Assessment	Life cycle approach
Baseline data	Outcome objectives
Clinical approach	Plan
Community based approach	Process objectives
Comprehensive intervention	Process of intervention
Continual improvement	Role-conflict
Evaluation	Selective level of intervention
Formative evaluation	Social norms approach
Human ecology approach	Social systems approach
Implementation	Summative evaluation
Indicated level of intervention	Universal level of intervention

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10.2: Conduct research on your problem

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10.2.1: The Scientific Method in Practice

The field of sociology developed in the 1800s. Auguste Comte defined sociology as “the study of society.” His goal, coined **positivism**, centered on social reform with the aim of improving society. Comte’s work developed from his observations of the social world. His research founded the field of sociology through the application of the scientific method to collect empirical data on society. In essence, sociology became the scientific study of social patterns (Griffiths, Keirns, Strayer, Cody-Rydzewsk, Scaramuzzo, Sadler, Vyain, Byer, and Jones 2015).

Since its inception, the scientific method is viewed as the way to answer questions about human social life. However, at the turn of the 20th century, some sociologists began to question the social research application of the scientific method. Instead, social researchers began to incorporate an interpretive approach to the field of sociology termed **antipositivism**. This **interpretive framework** implies numeric and statistical data gathered using a scientific method does not provide a deep understanding of the intent behind the thinking and behavioral patterns of people. As a result, sociologists today often examine statistical data and interpret or decode personal narratives in social research to identify patterns and draw conclusions about human social life. Sociologists use social research to create theories and identify solutions or interventions for change.

The **research process** is a method for gathering facts. The purpose of social research is to investigate and provide insight into how human societies function (Griffiths et al. 2015). Social research includes the scientific method and empirical evidence resulting in an **interpretive perspective** based on theoretical foundation. **Theories** are perspectives or viewpoints. Without empirical evidence or facts, theories are simply ideas or things believed to be true but not proven.



Figure 1. Visual Representation of the Interpretive Perspective. Attribution: Copyright Vera Kennedy, West Hills College Lemoore, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

The **scientific method** provides parameters for social research. The scientific method involves careful data collection, theory development, hypothesis formulation and testing (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). By using the scientific method, sociologists ensure validity and reliability of research findings and results. **Validity** ensures the research study is measuring what it is intended to measure. **Reliability** means that if someone else copies the same research process design and plan, they get consistent findings or results as the original research study. The scientific method establishes the margins and boundaries for objective and accurate research (Griffiths et al. 2015). Using a scientific research design or plan is a recipe for other researchers to test and substantiate someone’s work and findings.

Table 1. A Comparison of the Scientific Method in Basic and Applied Sociology. Attribution: Copyright Vera Kennedy, West Hills College Lemoore, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

In **basic sociology**, the scientific method serves as a guide in research design and includes these steps:

1. Identify a research topic or issue to study
2. Develop a research question to examine or explore
3. Create a hypothesis or make a prediction about the anticipated findings and results
4. Complete a literature review of other research on the question or topic of study
5. Design a research method and approach for collecting data or information
6. Gather and collect data
7. Analyze and interpret data
8. Report findings and results

In **applied sociology**, the scientific method serves as a guide in research design and in the identification of solutions or interventions and includes these steps:

1. Identify a social problem to address
2. Formulate a research question
3. Describe level of analysis and theoretical approach
4. Research interventions, programs, etc.
5. Develop a hypothesis
6. Identify intervention
7. Implement intervention
8. Evaluate and analyze results

Client-centered services requires sociological practitioners to find and build on facts to construct and understand an issue or condition of an individual, group, or organization (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). In applied sociology, the scientific method incorporates steps for gathering facts and insights about social patterns and interventions. The primary differences between the scientific method approach in basic and applied sociology are the topics and conditions practitioners research and study. Findings of scientific investigation in applied sociology help inform an understanding of a condition or issue and selection of strategies, solutions, or interventions for change (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). The goal in using the scientific method in applied sociology is to identify solutions or interventions to use and implement derived from theoretical foundation.

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10.2.2: Data Collection and Analysis

Theories are perspectives or viewpoints. Without facts, theories are simply ideas or things believed to be true though not proven. The research process is a method for gathering facts. The purpose of **social research** is to investigate and provide insight into how human societies function (Griffiths, et al. 2015). Social research includes empirical evidence and the scientific method resulting in an interpretive perspective based on theoretical foundation.

There are several **research methods** sociologists use to collect data or gather information about people. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses specific to the type of data collected and its usefulness. Every method collects certain types of information (quantitative or qualitative) on particular sample sizes (number of people of study). **Quantitative data** is numeric or statistical information. Quantitative data reflects social patterns of behavior with numbers and figures. **Qualitative data** is descriptive evidence. Qualitative data interprets personal accounts, narratives, and stories to depict social patterns. There are eight commonly used data collection methods to gather quantitative and/or qualitative data about people.



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A **survey** or questionnaire is a series of questions. Before developing and disseminating a survey, sociologists must determine the target group or population of study. Once a population is selected, the researcher must determine the sample or individuals from the target group that will be examined. The best method to get a representative sample is to obtain a **random sample**. This will allow everyone from the target group an equal chance of being selected for the study. When a researcher wants to target subsets of a group, they can generate a **stratified random sample**.

Survey questions must be developed in neutral language. Questions must allow respondents or participants to express their own opinions and respond to the survey to avoid biased answers.

When designing a research study, researchers must decide whether to use closed-ended or open-ended questions. **Closed-ended questions** allow respondents or participants to answer questions from a list of possible answers. **Open-ended questions** allow respondents or participants to answer questions in their own words.

Surveys are a good method for collecting quantitative data from large populations or groups. Administering a survey requires little to no direct contact with study subjects, meaning researchers spend less or little face-to-face time gathering data from people in comparison to other types of data collection methods. This method is limited to numeric or statistical analysis with narrow insight into the meaning or reasons behind responses or answers given by the participants.

Table 2. Effective Focus of the Most Common Data Collection Methods. Attribution: Copyright Vera Kennedy, West Hills College Lemoore, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

Research Method	Data Collection Focus
Survey	Quantitative
Participant Observation	Qualitative
Interview	Qualitative

Research Method	Data Collection Focus
Ethnography	Quantitative/Qualitative
Case Study	Qualitative
Secondary and Document Analysis	Quantitative/Qualitative
Unobtrusive Measures	Quantitative

Participant observation is the act of observing participants in the research setting. Here the researcher studies the group as a member of the group. Being a participant allows the researcher to observe and gain intimate insights into the ensemble and its members to develop a deep understanding of those involved. The primary challenge of this method is to avoid researcher bias from personal interactions and involvement as a member of the group.

An **interview** is a conversation with study participants. The research interviewer develops a series of questions to ask study subjects. Interviews gather people's thoughts, opinions, feelings, and biographies to help understand personal experiences and social patterns. Interviewers must develop rapport with participants to create a safe environment for sharing personal information and stories. This qualitative method is time consuming and widely used for collecting data from small groups or individuals.

Ethnography involves both participant observation and interview research methods. This technique allows the researcher to collect in-depth information about the observations made through formal (structured interview) and informal interactions (participant observation). The researcher is able to receive information about the intentions, motivations, or thoughts of the study participants. This approach reduces researcher bias and ensures focused analysis of social patterns verifiable by personal accounts of others.

Case studies involve a researcher focusing on a single event, situation, or individual to understand the dynamics of relationships (Henslin 2011). This in-depth qualitative method requires one-on-one longitudinal time with study subjects. The focus centers on understanding the personal biographies and accounts of individuals. Researchers must develop rapport and trust with participants over time to invoke open and honest truth telling about personal accounts and experiences.

Secondary and document analysis is a research method used to analyze data or information collected by another person or party. Secondary analysis may include a review of documents or written sources including books, newspapers, records, etc. (Henslin 2011). The limitations of this method center on the data collection approach and credibility of the source. Researchers cannot alter the data collection method to ensure validity and reliability as well as make changes to the type and focus of information gathered.

Unobtrusive measures are the act of "observing the behavior of people who do not know they are being studied" (Henslin 2011:26). Study subjects are unaware they are being examined. Researchers must take caution in using this approach. When appropriately employed, unobtrusive studies provide useful quantitative data for specific sites, environments, or contexts studied. However, information gathered using this method is not reliable for developing generalizations about social patterns. Additionally, researchers must protect identifying information during data collection to avoid violations of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity among study subjects.

UNOBTRUSIVE VS. OBTRUSIVE OBSERVATIONS

A useful research approach for sociological practitioners to apply in the workplace is observational research. This approach provides a practitioner to observe behavior in a natural setting.

1. Conduct an investigation on unobtrusive and obtrusive observations. Describe each research approach and explain how data is observed and collected.
2. What is the difference between obtrusive and unobtrusive observations?
3. Explain the positive aspects of applying an observational research approach to examine human social life.
4. Explain the negative aspects of applying an observational research approach to examine human social life.
5. Describe how a public sociologist and an applied sociologist would use observational research in her or his job to assess and solve social problems.

Experiments determine cause and effect relationships (Henslin 2011). In an experiment, there is an experimental and control group. The experimental group receives a variable, factor, or change while the control group receives no adjustments in order to compare the impact of variances or alterations between groups. A variable that causes a change is the **independent variable**,

whereas the variable that depends on another variable to change is the **dependent variable**. Experiments help understand the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

There are several limitations of experiments as a research method. Conducting an experiment is expensive (e.g., space, materials, participant incentives, etc.) and time consuming. Replicating experiments and experimental conditions is challenging. Similar to unobtrusive measures, generalizations based on results are not possible. That is, inferences from the study are not applicable to other individuals or groups beyond those in the experiment. Findings are relevant to those in the study only. In addition, researchers have little to no control over extraneous variables that may influence participant bias or results leading to artificial conclusions.

USING RESEARCH TO ASSESS AND SOLVE PROBLEMS

Think about a social problem you want to impact. Align each research method with the type or variety of data categories and information you can gather by applying the technique to help you assess the problem and develop possible solutions.



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10.2.3: Sociological Application - Using Research to Assess and Solve Problems

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10.2.4: Reading Reports of Sociological Research

Learning Objectives

- Identify what one can learn from an article simply by reading its abstract and its acknowledgments.
- Describe how tables presenting causal relationships are typically presented.
- Identify several key questions to ask when reading research reports.

By now you should have a good idea about the basic components of sociological research projects. You know how sociological research is designed, and you are familiar with how to frame a review of sociological literature. In Chapter 5, we discussed the various components of a research project and presented some tips on how to review literature as you design your own research project. But I hope that you'll find the sociological literature to be of interest and relevance to you beyond figuring out how to summarize and critique it in relation to your research plans. We sociologists like to think the research we do matters, but it cannot matter if our research reports go unread or are not understandable. In this section we'll review some material from Chapter 5 regarding sociological literature and we'll consider some additional tips for how to read and understand reports of sociological research.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, reading the abstract that appears in most reports of scholarly research will provide you with an excellent, easily digestible review of a study's major findings and of the framework the author is using to position her findings. Abstracts typically contain just a few hundred words, so reading them is a nice way to quickly familiarize yourself with a study. Another thing to look for as you set out to read and comprehend a research report is the author's acknowledgments. Who supported the work by providing feedback or other assistance? If relevant, are you familiar with the research of those who provided feedback on the report you are about to read? Are any organizations mentioned as having supported the research in some way, either through funding or by providing other resources to the researcher? Familiarizing yourself with an author's acknowledgments will give you additional contextual information within which to frame and understand what you are about to read.

Once you have read the abstract and acknowledgments, you could next peruse the discussion section near the end of the report, as suggested in Chapter 5. You might also take a look at any tables that are included in the article. A **table** provides a quick, condensed summary of the report's key findings. The use of tables is not limited to one form or type of data, though they are used most commonly in quantitative research. Tables are a concise way to report large amounts of data. Some tables present descriptive information about a researcher's sample. These tables will likely contain frequencies (N) and percentages (%). For example, if gender happened to be an important variable for the researcher's analysis, a descriptive table would show how many and what percent of all study participants are women and how many/what percent are men. Frequencies, or "how many," will probably be listed as *N*, while the percent symbol (%) might be used to indicate percentages.

In a table presenting a causal relationship, independent variable attributes are typically presented in the table's columns, while dependent variable attributes are presented in rows. This allows the reader to scan across a table's rows to see how values on the dependent variable attributes change as the independent variable attribute values change. Tables displaying results of quantitative analysis will also likely include some information about the strength and statistical significance of the relationships presented in the table. These details tell the reader how likely it is that the relationships presented will have occurred simply by chance.

Let's look at a specific example. Table 14.1, based on data from my study of older workers, presents the causal relationship between gender and experiencing harassing behaviors at work. In this example, gender is the independent variable and the harassing behaviors listed are the dependent variables.It wouldn't make any sense to say that people's workplace experiences *cause* their gender, so in this example, the question of which is the independent variable and which are the dependent variables has a pretty obvious answer. I have therefore placed gender in the table's columns and harassing behaviors in the table's rows. Reading across the table's top row, we see that 2.9% of women in the sample reported experiencing subtle or obvious threats to their safety at work, while 4.7% of men in the sample reported the same. We can read across each of the rows of the table in this way. Reading across the bottom row, we see that 9.4% of women in the sample reported experiencing staring or invasion of their personal space at work while just 2.3% of men in the sample reported having the same experience.

Of course, we cannot assume that these patterns didn't simply occur by chance. How confident can we be that the findings presented in the table did not occur by chance? This is where tests of statistical significance come in handy. **Statistical significance** tells us the likelihood that the relationships we observe could be caused by something other than chance. While your statistics class will give you more specific details on tests of statistical significance and reading quantitative tables, the important thing to be aware of as a nonexpert reader of tables is that some of the relationships presented will be statistically significant and others may

not be. Tables should provide information about the statistical significance of the relationships presented. When reading a researcher's conclusions, be sure to pay attention to which relationships are statistically significant and which are not.

In Table 14.1, you'll see that a *p* value is noted in the last very column of the table. A ***p* value** is a statistical measure of the probability that there is no relationship between the variables under study. Another way of putting this is that the *p* value provides guidance on whether or not we should reject the null hypothesis. The **null hypothesis** is simply the assumption that no relationship exists between the variables in question. In Table 14.1, we see that for the first behavior listed, the *p*value is 0.623. This means that there is a 62.3% chance that the null hypothesis is correct in this case. In other words, it seems likely that any relationship between observed gender and experiencing threats to safety at work in this sample is simply due to chance.

In the final row of the table, however, we see that the *p* value is 0.039. In other words, there is a 3.9% chance that the null hypothesis is correct. Thus we can be somewhat more confident than in the preceding example that there may be some relationship between a person's gender and his experiencing the behavior noted in this row. We might say that this finding is significant at the .05 level. This means that the probability that the relationship between gender and experiencing staring or invasion of personal space at work is due to sampling error alone is less than 5 in 100. Notice that I'm hedging my bets here by using words like *somewhat* and *may be*. When testing hypotheses, social scientists generally couch their findings in terms of rejecting the null hypothesis rather than making bold statements about the relationships observed in their tables. You can learn more about creating tables, reading tables, and tests of statistical significance in a class focused exclusively on statistical analysis. For now, I hope this brief introduction to reading tables will give you more confidence in your ability to read and understand the quantitative tables you encounter while reading reports of sociological research.

Table 1:.1 Percentage Reporting Harassing Behaviors at Work

Behavior Experienced at work	Women	Men	*p* value
Subtle or obvious threats to your safety	2.9%	4.7%	0.623
Being hit, pushed, or grabbed	2.2%	4.7%	0.480
Comments or behaviors that demean your gender	6.5%	2.3%	0.184
Comments or behaviors that demean your age	13.8%	9.3%	0.407
Staring or invasion of your personal space	9.4%	2.3%	0.039
Note: Sample size was 138 for women and 43 for men.			

Having read the tables in a research report, along with the abstract, acknowledgments, and discussion in the report, you are finally ready to read the report in its entirety. As you read a research report, there are several questions you can ask yourself about each section, from abstract to conclusion. Those questions are summarized in Table 14.2. Keep in mind that the questions covered here are designed to help you, the reader, to think critically about the research you come across and to get a general understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, and key takeaways from a given study. I hope that by considering how you might respond to the following questions while reading research reports, you'll feel confident that you could describe the report to others and discuss its meaning and impact with them.

Table 1:.2 Questions Worth Asking While Reading Research Reports

Report section	Questions worth asking
Abstract	What are the key findings? How were those findings reached? What framework does the researcher employ?
Acknowledgments	Who are this study's major stakeholders? Who provided feedback? Who provided support in the form of funding or other resources?

Report section	Questions worth asking
Introduction	How does the author frame his or her research focus? What other possible ways of framing the problem exist? Why might the author have chosen this particular way of framing the problem?
Literature review	How selective does the researcher appear to have been in identifying relevant literature to discuss? Does the review of literature appear appropriately extensive? Does the researcher provide a critical review?
Sample	Was probability sampling or nonprobability sampling employed? What is the researcher's sample? What is the researcher's population? What claims will the researcher be able to make based on the sample? What are the sample's major strengths and major weaknesses?
Data collection	How were the data collected? What do you know about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the method employed? What other methods of data collection might have been employed, and why was this particular method employed? What do you know about the data collection strategy and instruments (e.g., questions asked, locations observed)? What *don't* you know about the data collection strategy and instruments?
Data analysis	How were the data analyzed? Is there enough information provided that you feel confident that the proper analytic procedures were employed accurately?
Results	What are the study's major findings? Are findings linked back to previously described research questions, objectives, hypotheses, and literature? Are sufficient amounts of data (e.g., quotes and observations in qualitative work, statistics in quantitative work) provided in order to support conclusions drawn? Are tables readable?
Discussion/conclusion	Does the author generalize to some population beyond her or his sample? How are these claims presented? Are claims made supported by data provided in the results section (e.g., supporting quotes, statistical significance)? Have limitations of the study been fully disclosed and adequately addressed? Are implications sufficiently explored?

Key takeaways

- In tables presenting causal relationships, the independent variable is typically presented in the table's columns while the dependent variables are presented in the table's rows.
- When reading a research report, there are several key questions you should ask yourself for each section of the report.

ExerciseS

1. Find a table in a research report of your choosing. Challenge yourself to summarize the relationships represented by the table. Check your work by reading the Findings section of the article.
2. Read a scholarly article from start to finish, answering the questions outlined in Table 14.2 as you read through each section.

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10.2.5: Being a Responsible Consumer of Research

Learning Objectives

- Identify what one needs to do to be a responsible consumer of research.

Being a responsible consumer of research requires that you take seriously your identity as a social scientist. Now that you are familiar with how to conduct research and how to read the results of others' research, you have some responsibility to put your knowledge and skills to use. Doing so is in part a matter of being able to distinguish what you do know based on the information provided by research findings from what you do not know. It is also a matter of having some awareness about what you can and cannot reasonably know as you encounter research findings.

When assessing social scientific findings, think about what information has been provided to you. In a scholarly journal article, you will presumably be given a great deal of information about the researcher's method of data collection, her or his sample, and information about how the researcher identified and recruited research participants. All these details provide important contextual information that can help you assess the researcher's claims. If, on the other hand, you come across some discussion of social scientific research in a popular magazine or newspaper, chances are that you will not find the same level of detailed information that you would find in a scholarly journal article. In this case, what you do and do not know is more limited than in the case of a scholarly journal article.

Also take into account whatever information is provided about a study's funding source. Most funders want, and in fact require, that recipients acknowledge them in publications. But more popular press may leave out a funding source. In this Internet age, it can be relatively easy to obtain information about how a study was funded. If this information is not provided in the source from which you learned about a study, it might behoove you to do a quick search on the web to see if you can learn more about a researcher's funding. Findings that seem to support a particular political agenda, for example, might have more or less weight once you know whether and by whom a study was funded.

There is some information that even the most responsible consumer of research cannot know. Because researchers are ethically bound to protect the identities of their subjects, for example, we will never know exactly who participated in a given study. Researchers may also choose not to reveal any personal stakes they hold in the research they conduct. While researchers may "start where they are," a process outlined in Chapter 4, we cannot know for certain whether or how researchers are personally connected to their work unless they choose to share such details. Neither of these "unknowables" is necessarily problematic, but having some awareness of what you may never know about a study does provide important contextual information from which to assess what one can "take away" from a given report of findings.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- Being a responsible consumer of research means giving serious thought to and understanding what you do know, what you don't know, what you can know, and what you can't know.

Exercise

1. Find a report of scholarly research in a newspaper. What do you know from the report? What don't you know? How might you find the answers to your remaining questions?

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10.2.6: Media Reports of Sociological Research

Learning Objectives

- Cite the major differences between scholarly and media reports of sociological research.
- Identify the kinds of questions that may remain unanswered in media reports of sociological research.

As you have probably already gathered, we are likely to encounter sociological research in the news and other media. For example, check out the American Sociological Association's media coverage links (www.asanet.org/press/media_co...highlights.cfm). There you'll see that for just one study, on the consequences of parental divorce for child development (Kim, 2011),Kim, H. S. (2011). Consequences of parental divorce for child development. *American Sociological Review, 76*,487–511. there were 170 news articles describing the study and its findings over the course of one month, June 2011. This particular study provides a good example of the difference between the information provided about a study in a scholarly journal article and the media's coverage of the same study.

Let's look at some of the differences between the aforementioned study's coverage in the media and its treatment in a scholarly journal. First, watch the following coverage from *The View*'s August 24, 2011, program: http://theview.abc.go.com/video/hot-...s-divorce-kids. Once you have watched the clip, ask yourself what you have learned about the study. Who conducted the research described? What are the study's key findings? How many people participated in the study? Who were those participants? What sorts of data were analyzed? Which findings were statistically significant? Also note what questions you still have about the study. Where might you go to get the answers to your questions?

After watching *The View* clip several times, I was able to gather that the study has two key findings: (a) a child is more negatively affected by losing a parent to divorce than by the tension that leads to the breakup, and (b) children's math scores drop after a divorce but reading and "other skills" do not suffer. As far as who participated, I heard that "3-year-olds and so on" were the participants, though I am not certain how *many* of them participated. I also don't know who conducted the study, who (if anyone) provided funding for the study, when the data were collected, and so on. But if you review the article published in the *American Sociological Review* (ASR) that reports results of the study, all these questions are answered.

You might be saying to yourself, "So what?" Perhaps you took note that *The View* coverage *does*mention that the study was published in the ASR. If you did notice this, then kudos to you. Because the ASR is a peer-reviewed publication of the American Sociological Association, we should have some confidence that the study is reputable. But we still don't hear all the information that might shape what we choose to take away from this study. For example, a review of the ASR article will tell us that the data come from a sample of people who were in kindergarten from 1998 to 1999. Perhaps that is of little consequence, but we might wish to pause to consider whether or how our cultural social context has shifted since 1998 and how that might impact how kindergartners *today* respond to parental divorce. I am not at all suggesting that only studies whose data are seconds or days old hold value. (If that were the case, I'd say we can safely disregard any of my own publications.) Instead, I want to call your attention to some of the questions you might ask yourself as a responsible consumer of research.

In addition to all the times that sociological research *does* make the news, there are also instances when it does not but probably should. In June 2011, for example, an article on children's gender nonconformity appeared in the *New York Times* (Hoffman).Hoffman, J. (2011, June 10). "Boys will be boys?" Not in these families. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/fashion/new-challenge-for-parents-childrens-gender-roles.html?pagewanted=all The article took the perspective that children's expressions of gender were natural and biologically ingrained. While we cannot say for certain that this isn't true, we *do* know from many years of reputable and highly regarded research by sociologists of gender that gender norms and behaviors are in many cases constructed *socially*, not biologically. That the article omits this perspective and the voices of sociologists who do research in this area is unfortunate—both for *New York Times*' readers and for sociology.

Keeping in mind your knowledge about sociology and sociological research the next time you come across descriptions of sociological research in various media outlets, ask yourself some questions about the research you encounter.

1. Where do you see sociological research described?
2. How is it described?
3. What information is present, and what is missing from the media account of sociological research?
4. How and where might you access the details that are missing?

Keep an eye out for the absence of sociological research as well and consider the following:

1. Are there programs or news stories that might be well served to incorporate sociological research findings?
2. How might the inclusion of sociological research shift the story?

By asking yourself these questions as you go about your daily routine, you will have integrated sociological research into your everyday life.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Media reports of sociological research, while important, may leave key questions about the research unanswered.
- When reading media reports of sociological research, it is useful to follow up your reading by checking the original scholarly source in which the research is reported.

Exercises

1. Find a report of scholarly research in a nonscholarly source other than a newspaper. What would you say are the key takeaways reported by the nonscholarly source? Next, find and read a *scholarly* source's report of the same research. What would you say are the key takeaways reported by the scholarly source? How do the takeaways from each source differ? How are they similar? How has your own understanding of the work changed by reading the scholarly report?
2. Find a news story that you think could have be strengthened by the inclusion of sociological research. How might the inclusion of sociological research shift the story?

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10.2.7: It's Everywhere

Learning Objectives

- Identify locations where we might find examples of sociology and sociological research.
- Describe how having a background in sociological research methods is useful for our everyday encounters with sociology.

A few years ago, I was at home minding my own business and watching one of my favorite shows, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, when sociology made an appearance. The episode, as I recall, centered on a child who was bullied at school because she had two mothers. In the show, the lawyers discuss research on parenting that was published in the *American Sociological Review*.While my search uncovered that the episode to which I'm referring originally aired on NBC on December 6, 2005, I have not been able to unearth the article to which the show's characters refer. The American Sociological Association does note, however, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*'s mention of the journal on its website: www.asanet.org/news/2005.cfm.

It's amazing where and how often you might discover sociology rearing its head when you begin to pay attention, look for it, and listen for it. The benefit of having knowledge about sociological research methods is that when sociology does appear in your everyday life, you'll be better equipped to understand those brief mentions than you would be without some background in research methods.

Sometimes we might come across sociological research and not even realize it. As you've seen in the examples described throughout this chapter, there are opportunities every day to encounter sociological research or, at the very least, its effects. Remember our discussion of the Walmart case in Chapter 1? As you may recall, Professor William Bielby testified as a sociologist on behalf of the plaintiffs in the case. The Walmart case is a great example of sociology playing a role in matters of everyday life even when we may not realize it. Sociologists have participated as expert witnesses in numerous other cases as well. As a sociologist who studies workplace harassment, I was once called upon to offer the sociological perspective in sexual harassment suit. Professor Emeritus Lewis Yablonsky (2002)You can read more about the cases that Professor Yablonsky has been involved in in the following article he wrote for the American Sociological Association's newsletter in 2002: Yablonsky, L. (2002, January). Sociologists as expert witnesses in the criminal justice system. *Footnotes*. Retrieved from http://www.asanet.org/footnotes/jan02/fn17.html has been involved in more than 50 cases, providing his expert sociological opinion on cases involving homicide and other forms of violence.

In addition to offering their expert testimony in court cases and law suits, sociologists also play a role in shaping social policy. Professor Valerie Jenness, for example, has consulted with the state of California to help craft corrections policies there, particularly those focused on transgender inmates, sexual assault in correctional facilities, and hate crime statute implementation (www.asanet.org/about/awards/public/Jenness.cfm). Professor Diane Vaughn, an organizational sociologist, participated in the investigation following the space shuttle *Columbia*'s disintegration during reentry in 2003. Vaughn's sociological perspective added a social dimension to the investigation and helped identify the social and cultural factors at NASA that contributed to the *Columbia*'s demise (www.asanet.org/about/awards/public/vaughan.cfm). Finally, Dr. Darlene Iskra's research "had a dramatic impact on national policy" (www.asanet.org/about/awards/public/segal.cfm) when her work on gender discrimination in the military led to legislation that eliminated unequal requirements for men and women personnel serving in Saudi Arabia ("What is a trailblazer?," 2011).What is a trailblazer? Dr. Darlene Iskra, adjunct instructor, sociology, is a Navy pioneer. (2011, July 15). *Columbia College Spotlights*. Retrieved from http://spotlight.ccis.edu/2011/07/what-is-trailblazer.html These are just a few of the many examples of how the sociological perspective and sociological researchers have played a role in shaping our policies.A useful source for additional examples is the American Sociological Association's descriptions of past winners of its prestigious Public Understanding of Sociology Award. Those descriptions can be found at www.asanet.org/about/awards/public.cfm.

Another way that we might inadvertently come across sociology is when we encounter the ever-popular armchair sociologist. Perhaps you've met some of these folks or even played the role yourself a time or two. Armchair sociologists tend to wax poetic about how society "is" or how various groups of people "are" without having anything more than anecdotal evidence (or perhaps no evidence at all) to support their sweeping claims. Remember the example from Chapter 1 about a friend who once proclaimed that "all men lie all the time?" That's a perfect example of armchair sociology. Now that you are equipped with a better understanding of how we know what we know, and in particular how sociologists know what they know, you are well prepared to question the assumptions of the armchair sociologists you meet. And by sharing with others what *you* know about how we "know" things, perhaps you'll even help others break the habit of making unfounded assumptions. Understanding sociological research

methods is excellent preparation for questioning the everyday assumptions that others make. And let's face it; we've all probably made some unfounded assumptions about the way the world works or about what "other" people are like at one time or another.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Sociological research appears in many areas of our lives and sometimes in unexpected locations.
- Having an understanding of sociological research methods can be of benefit in areas of your life outside of the classroom.

Exercises

1. Find evidence of sociological research in a location where you did not expect to find it or may not have found it if not deliberately seeking it out. Ask two or three of your peers to do the same and then swap stories. Where did you find sociology? How did you find it? What relevance does sociology have to the example that you found? How did your knowledge about research methods help you identify or understand the instance of sociology that you found?

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10.2.8: Doing Research for a Cause

Learning Objectives

- Define and provide at least one example of action research.
- Define *stakeholders*.

Some sociologists engage in research for reasons in addition to or aside from career motivations. These individuals might conduct some form of action research. While action research may be conducted as part of a person's paid employment, as described in Section 15.1, you might also conduct action research as a volunteer working for a cause that you find worthy. If you've discovered that you have an interest in sociological research but would rather not pursue a career in research, perhaps some volunteer involvement in action is for you.

Action research, sometimes referred to as participatory action research, is defined as research that is conducted for the purpose of creating some form of social change. When conducting action research, scholars collaborate with community **stakeholders** at all stages of the research process with the aim of producing results that will be usable in the community and by scientists. On the continuum of basic to applied research, action research is very far on the applied end of the spectrum. Sociologists who engage in this form of research never just go it alone; instead, they collaborate with the people who are affected by the research. Kristin Esterberg puts it quite eloquently when she says, "At heart, all action researchers are concerned that research not simply contribute to knowledge but also lead to positive changes in people's lives" (2002, p. 137).Esterberg, K. G. (2002). *Qualitative methods in social research*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill. Action research was first developed in the 1960s and 1970s (Freire, 1970)Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). New York, NY: Herder and Herder. for the purpose of empowering individuals in underdeveloped nations (Reason, 1994).Reason, P. (1994). *Participation in human inquiry*. London, UK: Sage. Since then, action research has become increasingly popular among scholars who wish for their work to have tangible outcomes that benefit the groups that they study.

There are many excellent examples of action research. Some of these focus solely on arriving at useful outcomes for the communities upon which and with whom research is conducted. Other action research projects result in some new knowledge that has a practical application and purpose *in addition to* the creation of knowledge for basic scientific purposes. A search using the key term *action research* in Sociological Abstracts will yield a number of examples of the latter type.

One example of action research can be seen in Fred Piercy and colleagues' (Piercy, Franz, Donaldson, & Richard, 2011)Piercy, F. P., Franz, N., Donaldson, J. L., & Richard, R. F. (2011). Consistency and change in participatory action research: Reflections on a focus group study about how farmers learn. *The Qualitative Report, 16*, 820–829. work with farmers in Virginia, Tennessee, and Louisiana. Together with farmers in these states, the researchers conducted focus groups to understand how farmers learn new information about farming. Ultimately, the aim of this study was to "develop more meaningful ways to communicate information to farmers about sustainable agriculture." This improved communication, the researchers and farmers believed, would benefit not just researchers interested in the topic but also farmers and their communities. Farmers and researchers were both involved in all aspects of the research, from designing the project and determining focus group questions to conducting the focus groups and finally to analyzing data and disseminating findings.

Many additional examples of action research can be found at Loyola University Chicago's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL; http://www.luc.edu/curl/index.shtml). At the center, researchers seek "to promote equality and to improve people's lives in communities throughout the Chicago metropolitan region." For example, in 2006 researchers at CURL embarked on a project to assess the impact on small, local retailers of new Walmart stores entering urban areas (Jones, 2008).Jones, S. M. (2008, May 13). Cities may mute effect of Wal-Mart. *Chicago Tribune*. The study found that, while the effect of Walmart on local retailers seems to have a larger impact in rural areas, Chicago-area local retailers did not experience as dramatic an impact. Nevertheless a "small but statistically significant relationship" was found between Walmart's arrival in the city and local retailers' closing their doors. This and other research conducted by CURL aims to raise awareness about and promote positive social change around issues affecting the lives of people in the Chicago area. CURL meets this aim by collaborating with members of the community to shape a research agenda, collect and analyze data, and disseminate results.

Perhaps one of the most unique and rewarding aspects of engaging in action research is that it is often interdisciplinary. Action research projects might bring together researchers from any number of disciplines, from the social sciences, such as sociology, political science, and psychology; to an assortment of physical and natural sciences, such as biology and chemistry; to engineering, philosophy, and history (to name just a few). One recent example of this kind of interdisciplinary action research can be seen in the

University of Maine's Sustainability Solutions Initiative (SSI) (http://www.umaine.edu/sustainability...ions/index.htm). This initiative unites researchers from across campus together with local community members to "connect knowledge with action in ways that promote strong economies, vibrant communities, and healthy ecosystems in and beyond Maine." The knowledge-action connection is essential to SSI's mission, and the collaboration between community stakeholders and researchers is crucial to maintaining that connection. SSI is a relatively new effort; stay tuned to the SSI website to follow how this collaborative action research initiative develops.

Anyone interested in social change can benefit from having some understanding of social scientific research methods. The knowledge you've gained from your methods course can be put to good use even if you don't have an interest in pursuing a career in research. As a member of a community, perhaps you will find that the opportunity to engage in action research presents itself to you one day. And your background in research methodology will no doubt assist you and your collaborators in your effort to make life better for yourself and those who share your interests, circumstances, or geographic region.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Action research is conducted by researchers who wish to create some form of social change.
- Action research is often conducted by teams of interdisciplinary researchers.

Exercise

1. If you're interested in learning more about action research, or perhaps reading some specific examples of action research, check out the journal *Gateways*. It is a free, electronic, peer-reviewed scholarly journal focused on community-engaged research. Here's the link: http://www.luc.edu/curl/uts/index.html.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

10.2.9: Appendix - Research Portfolio

10.2.9.1: Instructions for completing the Research Portfolio assignment

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10.2.9.1: Instructions for completing the Research Portfolio assignment

- **Research Portfolio:** There are 5 research designs you are required to address for this assignment. There is a discussion forum devoted to each design:
  - Survey
  - Correlational
  - Quasiexperimental
  - Experimental
  - Qualitative
- You must submit a research article (or the link to a research article) which exemplifies each research design. In addition to facilitating the discussion of the articles you submit, you must participate in the discussions led by the other students.

Your initial post in each discussion forum must contain:

- a working link to the research article, OR
- the article as an attachment, OR
- paste in a copy of the article

As soon as you submit your initial post, reply to it with the following information (not all articles will contain all of this information):

1. Identify the research as Basic or Applied – and justify your conclusion
2. Identify the population of interest
3. Identify the sampling procedure and the sample
4. Identify the independent and dependent variables
5. Identify the hypothesis
6. Discuss any ethical issues
7. Identify the research conclusion
8. Discuss any theoretical implications

You are to facilitate the ensuing discussion of your research article. Make sure all of the salient issues are fully discussed.

In addition to facilitating the discussion of the article you submit, you must be an active participant in the discussion of the other articles submitted.

Contributors and Attributions

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10.3: Identify main contributors

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10.4: Develop an intervention

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10.4.1: Basic, Public, and Applied Sociology

There are a variety of ways people use and practice sociology. Basic, public, and applied sociology are the most common forms of sociological practice. Each form integrates research on human social life to understand and improve society.

Some people in sociology use discipline concepts and theories to produce knowledge and research in the field. This form of sociological practice is **basic sociology**. Academics including teachers, scholars, and researchers use basic sociology to study society, test hypothesis, and construct theories.

Theories explain how things work and are fundamental in understanding and solving social issues (Steele and Price 2008). To address social issues, we must understand their structure, influences, and processes. Sociological theories give a better understanding of how society works to guide solutions and improve circumstances. Basic sociology helps develop understanding about human social life including the influence of groups and organizations on people to improve society (Henslin 2011). A basic sociologist will analyze society based on theoretical foundation and publish findings for practitioners to identify and construct the best and most effective practices in addressing and solving social issues.

Public sociology uses empirical methods and theoretical insights to evaluate and analyze social policy (Henslin 2011). Formal norms such as laws, regulations, court orders, and executive decisions enacted by government are **social policies**. A public sociologist studies society and social policies to engage in issues of public and political concern for social change (Burawoy 2014). These practitioners use sociological research and theories to contribute and influence policy, activism, and social movements.

This image "Architecture Blur Close up Clouds" by Jacob Morch is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Applied sociology uses information about society and social forces or actions to solve social issues. The goal of applied sociology is to use theories, concepts, and methods to solve real-world problems (Steele and Price 2008). This form of sociological practice is the application of sociology to improve society, not rebuild it or create social reform as with public sociology. Applied sociologists use sociology to address a specific social issue for a specific group of people. This form of practice applies sociological principles and methods to enhance human social life by using analyzing, evaluating, and suggesting interventions or solutions grounded in theory.

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

As an applied sociologist, W.E.B. DuBois used social research and findings to liberate and empower people of color. Research the publications and work of DuBois then explain how his findings and efforts influenced sociological practice today.

Clinical sociology, an arm of applied sociology, emphasizes the implementation of client-centered or direct service solutions. These practitioners work to solve client-centered problems by using social research to diagnose and measure interventions for change (Steele and Price 2008). These practitioners integrate sociological principles and methods to address social conditions and issues of individuals, groups, and organizations. Clinical sociologists use interventions or solutions supported by empirical evidence and grounded in theory to help improve the lives of others (Henslin 2011). This form of practice uses sociological components to serve and meet the needs of people and groups.

1. Watch the video entitled *What is Applied Sociology* by Dr. Stephen F. Steele: https://youtu.be/qEG5TV9za_g.
2. After viewing the film, explain the different forms of sociological practice.
3. Describe how sociology might be used or incorporated in the workplace.
4. Provide three examples of jobs or careers that incorporate sociological practice.

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10.4.2: Public Sociology

Learning Objectives

- Identify and describe at least two examples of public sociology.

In Chapter 1, we discussed public sociology and its place on the continuum of applied-basic research. One of the most delightful consequences of the trend toward public sociology is that the discipline has become more visible and more accessible to much broader audiences than perhaps ever before. But even with the increased accessibility of sociological research, you'll find that having a basic understanding of how sociologists conduct research, which you've gained from this text, is beneficial. In this section, we'll take a look at a few recent examples of public sociology and examine how your background in sociological research methods can help you read, make sense of, discuss, and even share the findings you come across.

In recent months, I've been interviewed by a journalist writing for a website run by Dr. Mehmet Oz of *The Dr. Oz Show* (http://www.youbeauty.com) and another writing for a website dedicated to any and every thing having to do with "video games and geek culture" (http://www.unwinnable.com). Inspired by the fall 2011 television programming lineup in the United States—in particular two new shows, including one featuring Playboy Bunnies and the other focused on the experiences of early PanAm flight attendants—the youbeauty.com interview focused on how expressions of gender, workplace norms, and harassment have changed in the past few decades.You can read the final article at http://www.youbeauty.com/relationshi...-good-grooming. Interestingly, while the single quote attributed to me is accurate, the context within which I made the remark is not provided. One important caution for sociologists who choose to participate in press interviews is that your perspective may not always be represented in a way that you'd choose. In the other interview, conducted for an article on how heroism has changed since September 11, 2001 (Bannen, 2011),Bannen, B. (2011, July 19). Superheroes in a post-9/11 society. *Unwinnable*. Retrieved from http://www.unwinnable.com/2011/07/29...t-911-society/ I was asked questions about patterns of social change. In both cases I was "doing" public sociology, drawing from my own background and knowledge about the sociological perspective on human behavior to help make sense of recent and current trends in society.

Many other sociologists engage in public sociology as well. Professor Pepper Schwartz, whose name you might recall from Chapter 4, is perhaps one of the most recognized public sociologists. In Chapter 4, I mentioned Schwartz's role as the relationship expert for the dating website PerfectMatch.com. Schwartz is also the sex and relationship expert for the American Association for Retired Persons, for whom she writes a regular column offering advice to those aged 50 and up. Her participation with these venues enables Schwartz to provide relevant sociological understanding, perspective, and knowledge to broad audiences.

Another example of public sociology can be seen in Professor Nikki Jones's work. Jones, an urban ethnographer who studies adolescent girls' violence, has found that the "mean girl" phenomenon represented in so much of our popular culture and so many news stories today is far more hype than reality (Chesney-Lind & Jones, 2010; Jones, 2009).Jones, N. (2009). *Between good and ghetto: African American girls and inner-city violence*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers; Chesney-Lind, M., & Jones, N. (Eds.). (2010). *Fighting for girls: New perspectives on gender and violence*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. In an effort to promote a better understanding of this and other matters of public interest upon which sociological and other scholarly evidence can and should be brought to bear, Jones collaborates with two other editors to maintain the website *The Public Intellectual*(http://thepublicintellectual.org). The site publishes work by academics and other researchers who write pieces intended to debunk "common knowledge" on matters of public concern, analyze social policies and problems, and examine cultural trends.

Finally, Professors Lisa Wade and Gwen Sharp provide another excellent example of public sociology on their website *Sociological Images* (http://thesocietypages.org/socimages). The site provides sociological observations and commentary on images of all kinds, from advertisements to charts and graphs, and from around the globe. Their aim is to "encourage all kinds of people to exercise and develop their sociological imagination by presenting brief sociological discussions of compelling and timely imagery that spans the breadth of sociological inquiry." The images Wade and Sharp display on the site are chosen for their ability to illustrate sociological ideas in a way that is both compelling and accessible to sociological and nonsociological audiences alike. Peruse their site and as you'll see from the comments noted underneath each of the discussion/image posts that the *Sociological Images* audience runs the gamut in background, ideology, and perspective. In other words, the site accomplishes the exact aim of public sociology: to engage the public.

Key takeaways

- One of the positive consequences of public sociology is that the discipline has become more visible and more accessible to much broader audiences than in the past.
- Having a background in sociological research methods can help you read, make sense of, discuss, and share the research findings you encounter.

Exercises

1. Check out at least one of the websites mentioned in the preceding section. What do you think of these examples of public sociology? Ask one of your nonsociologist friends to peruse the site. Discuss what you each found compelling. How does your knowledge of sociological research methods shape your understanding of what you've read?
2. Discuss public sociology with a few of your sociology peers. In what areas do you think public sociology can and should play a role?

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10.4.3: Levels of Analysis

C. Wright Mills (1959) described the connection between personal struggles to public issues. He described that by understanding the **personal struggles** or conditions people confront, we foster awareness about how widespread the struggles are among people in society and the impact they have on everyone as a **social problem**. For example, by learning about the individual troubles and challenges one is facing with opioid addiction, sociologists get a good understanding about how these dilemmas might influence or manifest in other opioid addicts and provide insight into possible ways of combating the condition for everyone with a similar problem. Through scientific research, sociological practitioners not only gather and learn information to help individuals, they also use the data to infer or evaluate a problem on a larger scale to help society address the issue and those effected by the problem (i.e., individuals, family, friends, organizations, and communities).

Sociological practitioners work on improving conditions for individuals and society as a whole. Basic, public, and applied sociologists gather research on personal issues to develop a framework for understanding public or social problems and possible solutions for improving human social life on a large scale. Public and applied sociologists specifically use scientific research to solve and improve social plights or conditions. Some practitioners choose to work with individuals to solve their personal issues or challenges using scientifically proven methods within the social context. These practitioners are clinical sociologists.

There are three continuums or **levels of social analysis** in the field of sociology. A sociological practitioner works and solves problems within or across these continuums. Regardless of the level of analysis (macro, meso, or micro), a practitioner must learn about and understand all three continuums to find the best approach or solution to addressing the personal or public issue they are working to solve.

Personal troubles influence and have consequences for individuals, families, friends, organizations, and communities. Sociological analysis of personal and public issues require comprehension about how people interact and live together (i.e., the **social arrangement**). Analyzing the macro, meso, and micro continuum gives us information about the social arrangement from three different levels.

The macro continuum or **macro level** analysis examines large social units including global and national systems, policies, processes as well as large corporate structures, programs, and organizations. Macro level analysis includes exploration of broad scale social institutions including political and legal systems and processes, military systems and orders, economies, social welfare systems and processes, religions, educational systems and programs, and communication media (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). Macro analysis also evaluates social adaptation and change such as the evolving roles of women in the workplace, politics, and leadership.



Figure 1: This image "Alone Buildings City Cityscape" by Pixabay is licensed under CC BY 4.0

In sociological practice, we must be aware of the systems, policies, processes, institutions, and organizations connected to personal and public issues or problems. Considering the issue of opioid addiction, a practitioner will need to assess the macro level arrangements involved in creating (drug manufacturers), supporting (drug cartels), and combating (criminal justice system) the problem.

Midlevel or **meso level** analysis examines networks, communities, organizations, and groups. The meso continuum ranges from government agencies, corporations, universities, and small secondary groups including departments, units, or clubs (Bruhn and Rebach 2007). This level of analysis evaluates internal and external effectiveness, change, adaption, and intergroup relations of a network, community, or organization. Working on the opioid addiction epidemic, a sociological practitioner must investigate the meso level arrangements supporting and fighting addiction such as the Drug Enforcement Agency, Coast Guard, Purdue Pharma (leading manufacturer of the narcotic painkiller OxyContin), local law enforcement agencies, local mental health professionals, community addiction programs, family support groups, etc. The practitioner must understand how these groups influence each other, work together, and impede each other's goals or mission around opioid addiction.

Table 3: Continuums of Social Analysis. Attribution: Copyright Vera Kennedy, West Hills College Lemoore, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

Level of Analysis	Social Arrangement Examination	
Macro	Large social units • Systems • Structures • Policies	• Processes • Institutions • Organizations
Meso	Midlevel social units • Network • Community	• Organization • Group
Micro	Small social units • Interactions • Socialization	• Relationships and roles • Thinking and motivation

As you begin your professional career, you will need to learn about and understand the industry and organization you work in and the clientele you serve.

1. Research organizations in your desired field or matching your career interest.
2. Choose one organization for those you researched to learn more about for this application.
3. Using a macro level of analysis, find out the systems, policies, processes, and institutions influencing or affecting the operations of the organization.
4. Applying a meso level of analysis, investigate which networks, communities, external organizations, and external and internal groups shaping the organization.
5. Exercising the micro level of analysis, explore different roles of people involved in the organization, the socialization process of individuals within the organization to learn and establish organizational norms and acceptance, relationships between internal and external people involved with the organization, hierarchy and dominance structures of individuals within and receiving services from the organization.

The **micro level** examines small social units of which the individual is the social focus as a member of a specific social system (Bruhn and Rebach 207). To understand the individual, micro level analysis serves to identify interactions among individuals and relationships among group members. This level focuses on understanding the roles of individuals in groups, relationships between group members, hierarchy and dominance structures of individuals within groups, and the socialization process of individuals to learn and establish group norms and acceptance. Micro analysis also studies the motivation, self-esteem, and socio-emotional intelligence of individuals and small groups (Rosenberg and Turner 1990; Hochschild 1979). To understand opioid addiction at a micro level, sociological practitioners will examine the first opioid experience of addicts (who, what, where, when, and why), the personal and social group influences supporting addiction, and social groups or group members helping to combat or reduce addiction.

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10.4.4: Theoretical Approaches

Paradigms are theoretical frameworks explaining society (Griffiths et al. 2015). These frameworks are perspectives, a way of observing and examining people and the world through different lenses. As a sociological practitioner, you must learn to use and apply sociological theories to understand and evaluate people and their social situations or conditions from an objective viewpoint to identify appropriate interventions.

Sociologists use theories to study and understand people. “The **theoretical paradigms** provide different lenses into the social constructions of life and the relationships of people” (Kennedy, Norwood, and Jendian 2017:22). In using the sociological eye, each theoretical paradigm helps remove bias in assessing people and social issues at all levels of analysis (macro, meso, and micro). There as three major paradigms in the field of sociology: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. Functionalism and conflict theory examine society on macro and meso levels. Symbolic interactionism investigates micro level interactions in society. There are also three modern or emerging paradigms in sociology: feminism, exchange theory, and environmental theory. Feminism and environmental analyze macro and meso levels. Exchange theory focuses on micro level analysis.



This image "Person Holding Magnifying Glass" by Mauricio Mascaro is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Functionalism is a macrosociological perspective examining the purpose or contributions of interrelated parts within the social structure. Functionalists examine how parts of society contribute to the whole. Everything in society has a purpose or function. Even a negative contribution helps society discern its function. For example, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs inspired society to define the behavior as undesirable, develop laws, and consequences for people committing such an act. A **manifest function** in society results in expected outcomes (i.e., using a pencil to develop written communication). Whereas, a **latent function** has unexpected results (i.e., using a pencil to stab someone). When a function creates unexpected results that cause social hardships or negative consequences the result is defined as a latent dysfunction.

Conflict Theory is a macrosociological perspective exploring the competition among social groups over resources in society. Groups compete for status, power, control, money, territory, and other resources for economic or social gain. Conflict Theory explores the struggle between those in power and those absent of power within a social context of struggle. The cultural war over immigration in the United States with competing groups representing open versus closed border ideologies is an example.

Symbolic Interactionism is a microsociological perspective observing the influence of interactions on thinking and behavior. Interactionists consider how people interpret meaning and symbols to understand and navigate the social world. Individuals create social reality through verbal and non-verbal interactions. These interactions form thoughts and behaviors in response to others influencing motivation and decision-making. Hearing or reading a word in a language one understands, results in a mental image and comprehension about the information shared or communicated (i.e., the English word “bread” is most commonly visualized as a slice or loaf and considered a food item).

There are three modern approaches to sociological theory (Carl 2013). **Feminism**, a macrosociological perspective, studies the experiences of women and minorities in the social world including the outcomes of inequality and oppression for these groups. One major focus of the feminist theoretical approach is to understand how age, ethnicity, race, sexuality, and social class intersect with gender to determine outcomes for people (Carl 2013). **Exchange Theory** examines decision-making of individuals in society. This microsociological perspective focuses on understanding how people consider a cost versus benefit analysis accentuating their

motivation and self-interest in making decisions. **Environmental Theory** explores how people adjust to ecological, both environmental and social, changes over time (Carl 2013). The focal point of this macrosociological perspective is to figure out how people adapt or evolve over time in response to ecological space or context.

Applying Theories

Functionalists examine how people work together to create society as a whole. From this perspective, societies need systems, policies, processes, and institutions to exist (Griffiths et al. 2015). For example, policies or laws function to support the social structure of society, and values and norms guide people in their thoughts and actions. Consider how education is an important concept in the United States because it is valued. Educational institutions including the policies and norms surrounding registration, attendance, grades, graduation, and materials (i.e., classrooms, textbooks, libraries) all support the emphasis placed on the value of education in the United States. By observing people using functionalism, we study how members of a society work together by investigating how social systems, policies, processes, and institutions meet the needs of social networks, communities, organizations, and groups.



This image "Woman in Black Coat" by Christina Morillo is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Conflict theorists understand the social structure as inherently unequal resulting from the differences in power based on age, class, education, gender, income, race, sexuality, and other social factors. For a conflict theorist, society reinforces issues of "privilege" groups and their status in social categories (Griffiths et al. 2015). Inequalities exist in every social system. Therefore, social norms benefit people with status and power while harming others and at the expense of others. For example, although cultural diversity is valued in the United States, some people and states prohibit interracial marriages, same-sex marriages, and polygamy (Griffiths et al. 2015). By applying conflict theory, we investigate the dynamics of power among and between social systems, policies, processes, institutions networks, communities, organizations, and groups.

Symbolic interactionists study the thoughts and actions of individuals through the expression of social interactions between them. These theorists conceptualize human interactions as a continuous process derived from the interpretation and meaning of the physical and social environment. “Every object and action has a symbolic meaning, and language serves as a means for people to represent and communicate their interpretations of these meanings to others” (Griffiths et al. 2015:72). Interactionists evaluate how people depend on the interpretation of meaning and how individuals interact when exchanging comprehension and meaning. For instance, derogatory terms such as the “N” word might be acceptable among people of the same cultural group but viewed as offensive and antagonistic when used by someone outside of the group. When sociological practitioners apply symbolic interactionism, they identify the implication words and symbols including tone, body language, and labels that influence thinking and behavior.

Table 4. Theoretical Perspectives in Sociological Practice.Attribution: Copyright Vera Kennedy, West Hills College Lemoore, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

Theoretical Paradigm	Level of Analysis	Application
Functionalism	Macro and meso	Examine how members of society work together

Theoretical Paradigm	Level of Analysis	Application
Conflict theory	Macro and meso	Investigate the social dynamics of power and inequality
Symbolic interactionism	Micro	Identify the implication of words and symbols on thinking and behavior
Feminism	Macro and meso	Distinguish the circumstances and effects of oppression on women and minority groups
Exchange theory	Micro	Evaluate the influence of social forces on thinking, behavior, and decisions
Environmental theory	Macro and meso	Discover the social and environmental impact on change or adaptation

Feminism explores the lives and experiences of women and minorities. For example, a woman in Lebanon does not have the right to dissolve a marriage without her husband's consent even in cases of spousal abuse (Human Rights Watch 2015). Feminism explicitly examines oppressive structures within systems, policies, and the inequity of institutions and groups in relation to age, gender, race, social class, sexuality, or other social category. The application of feminism in sociological practice notes the circumstances and effects of oppression resulting from social systems, policies, processes, and institutions on networks, communities, organizations, or social groups.

Exchange theorists observe how society and social interactions influence decision-making. Social values and beliefs often influence people's attitudes, judgments, or actions. Sociological practitioners apply exchange theory to evaluate people's decisions to see the social forces motivating or driving people's thinking, behavior, and choices.

Environmental theorists assess how people, as part of the social and physical environment, adapt and change over time. If you contemplate any rule of law, you can see how society has altered because of shifts in social ideas or ecological fluctuations. Consider the anti-tobacco laws in the United States making it illegal to smoke in public spaces as an example of social shifts towards health and wellness, or water meters to control and regulate residential water usage and waste as an example of ecological drought and prolonged water shortages in the United States. Application of environmental theory uncovers the social and environmental influences of change or areas encountering change in social systems, policies, process, institutions, networks, communities, organizations, and groups.

HARNESSING UNDERSTANDING ABOUT SOCIAL CONDITIONS

1. Review the organizational information you researched and assessed the Levels of Analysis exercise.
2. Analyze the organization using each of the theoretical paradigms: Functionalism, Conflict Theory, Interactionism, Feminism, Exchange Theory, and Environmental Theory.
3. Now, analyze the clientele or population served by the organization using each of paradigms: Functionalism, Conflict Theory, Interactionism, Feminism, Exchange Theory, and Environmental Theory.

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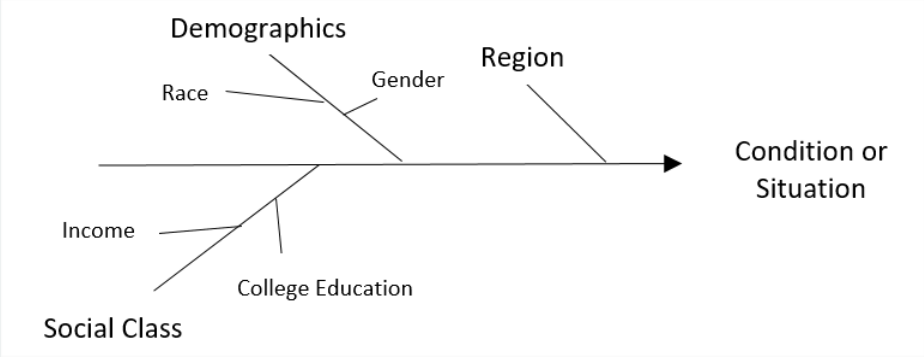
10.4.5: Using a Sociological Perspective

Organizations hire sociological practitioners to design new programs or evaluate existing ones. As a practitioner, you will need to use a sociological imagination to analyze a program's social condition or situation, its parts, and possible solutions. You will be responsible for examining the condition from the perspective of others including organizational administrators, staff, clients, and community affected to assist you in designing or evaluating the program. To accomplish this task, you must be able to complete an objective evaluation or needs assessment and communicate your findings to those involved.

To apply a sociological perspective you will need to examine the social arrangement of the condition or situation from a macro, meso, and micro level of analysis. To begin, identify the structure and make-up of the organization and systems involved in or around the issue that the program is working to address. Next, assess the social groups involved in the organization or system. Understand what input and impact these groups have on persons both involved within and served by the program. Finally, investigate the relationships and interactions among the organization, groups, and individuals involved in the program and condition it is addressing.

To construct a fishbone diagram, complete the following steps:

1. Identify the social condition or situation.
2. Brainstorm potential variables (categories or factors) influencing the condition including policies, resources, culture, etc.
3. Start a fishbone diagram with an arrow leading to the condition and variables branched off.
4. Write the categories or factors of the variables identified in item 3. Include the categories or factors above and below the arrow pointing to the condition. Be sure to connect the variable to specific names. For example:



5. Interpret the results and identify the primary issues influencing the current condition or situation. Consider how the theoretical paradigms can help you make sense of what is happening.
6. Write a summary of your findings by presenting the condition or situation, then explain the factors influencing the problem.
7. Plan the steps for implementing a solution or resolving the problem.

A useful way to understand a program or organization's needs is to chart the social condition or situation using a **fishbone diagram**. This tool constructs a visual representation of the social impact on a condition and identifies the primary issues affecting the problem. Results assist in developing a written summary of the factors influencing the condition and used to plan the next steps in solving or resolving any issues.

The mayor is working with city council leaders to improve waste management services to local residents in the area. The city is considering a private-public partnership to provide waste removal and recycling services to the community. Use your sociological imagination to identify the pros and cons of the city embarking on this partnership with a private, for-profit company. The partnership will require an annual contract with a fee for services. How will this type of partnership impact local residents? Consider the impact five (5) years from now.

1. Use a fishbone diagram to structure the issue.
2. Apply the six (6) theoretical paradigms in sociology to identify variables that may influence the issue.
3. Write a summary of your analysis.

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10.4.6: References, Key Terms and Concepts

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Key Terms and Concepts

Conflict Theory	Manifest function
Functionalism	Meso level
Environmental Theory	Micro level
Exchange Theory	Paradigms
Feminism	Personal struggles
Fishbone diagram	Social arrangement
Latent function	Social problem
Levels of social analysis	Symbolic interactionism
Macro level	Theoretical paradigms

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10.4.7: Skills and Competencies in Sociological Practice

Careers for sociologists are diverse and sometimes nontraditional (Viola and McMahon 2010). Sociologists are trained to help people and organizations assess and improve their social condition or situation. As agents of change, sociologists must develop an understanding of investigational methods, measurements, and social relationships to help clients and communities narrow the gap between their current condition and what they need (Bellman 1990). Overall, a sociologist's work focuses on helping people by adding value and expertise in research, data collection, and analysis about social issues and potential solutions.

Sociologists play a direct role in people's lives by providing information and support to individuals and organizations for change. Sociological practitioners help others create programs and services, build capacity and infrastructure, adapt to social and organizational fluctuations, and develop or increase resources (Viola and McMahon 2010). The social and collaborative nature of being a practitioner requires people skills including trust and integrity. As a result, sociologists must develop personal characteristics such as patience, flexibility, and tolerance to build trust with clients and community members they serve.

Being a sociologist requires knowledge in building and maintaining relationships with people. Sociological practitioners must develop the ability to establish rapport and trust with others for effective and efficient collaboration (Viola and McMahon 2010). The most critical interpersonal communication skills needed for a successful career in sociology includes listening, facilitation, and conflict resolution. These skills allow practitioners to communicate across cultures and share data or information using technical (formal) terminology and conversational (informal) language to work with and understand diverse individuals and groups.

Communication only happens when practitioners, clients, and community members engage in uncovering and understanding the meaning behind the words. **Active listening** requires listeners to give feedback, confirm understanding by asking questions, and making clarifying statements rather than focusing on what they want to say (Freedom Learning Group 2019). Without listening, there is no understanding and no foundation for building trust and rapport. By listening, a sociological practitioner can assess people's needs and translate their questions and desires into concrete tasks to support and help them.



Figure 4.1.1: This image "Six Women Standing and Sitting inside the Room" by Christine Morillo is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Much of the work facilitated by sociological practitioners focuses on partnerships with individuals and groups to cultivate solutions for change. Practitioners must demonstrate a level of leadership and **facilitation skills** to create an open, safe, and collaborative work environment for all participants. Creating an effective setting and atmosphere for change requires practitioners to be aware of the roles and intrinsic motivation of the people involved. This level of awareness helps manage group dynamics, cohesiveness, and direction for optimal results.

Secondarily, effective facilitation requires sensitivity to the established norms people bring to the collaborative process and the social pressures to conform when working in groups (Black, Bright, Gardner, Hartmann, Lambert, Leduc, Leopold, O'Rourke, Pierce, Steers, Terjesen, and Weiss 2019). An effective sociological practitioner will identify and show consideration for established norms while helping people recognize shared standards and customs among the collaborative group to identify common goals for change. Additionally, supportive practitioners aid individuals in dealing with internal group pressures that allows everyone to retain their unique characteristics or traits while accepting the collaborative groups' standards or procedures.

Lastly, by harnessing group cohesiveness, practitioners show collaborates how to help each other and work together as a team (Black et al. 2019). Practitioners emphasize the benefits of working together towards common goals for change. Group

cohesiveness blends complementary strengths and promotes a sense of ownership among each group member.

There are five stages of **team or group development** (Tuckman and Jensen 1977). The **forming stage** or first phase of development begins with the introduction of team members. This is commonly known as the "polite" stage in which team participants are friendly, demonstrate enthusiasm, focus on similarities, and look for leadership and direction among its membership (Black et al. 2019). The second or **storming stage** initiates when team members begin testing the group process. This is the "win-lose" stage where individuals clash for control over the group and choose sides creating a negative atmosphere with frustration around the goals, tasks, and progress of the group (Black et al. 2019).

The storming process may be long and painful for the team, but the third or norming stage will eventually form and take shape. In the **norming stage**, team members now demonstrate group cohesion, openly exchange and communicate ideas, have common goals, ground rules, boundaries, and share responsibility and control (Tuckman 1965). Once there is established value and respect for one another, the team is able to build momentum and achieve results. In the fourth or **performing stage**, the team is confident, self-directed, and expresses renewed enthusiasm (Black et al. 2019). In this stage, the team is a problem-solving instrument (Tuckman 1965).

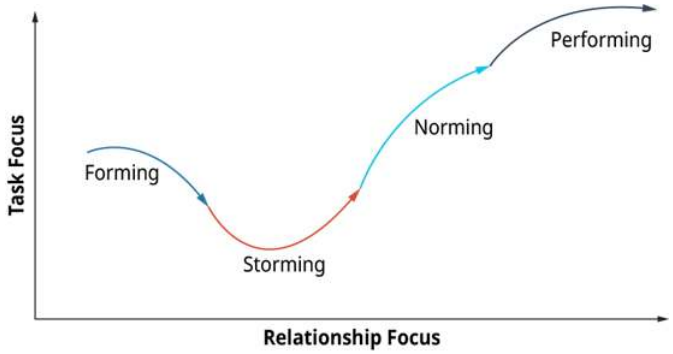


Figure 3: Tuckman's Model of Team Development. Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

As a project, program, or initiative ends, team members complete their work and the group begins to dissolve. This **adjourning stage** is the fifth and final stage of team development. In this stage, team members seek closure and recognition for their work and contributions (Tuckman and Jensen 1977).

Leading people and facilitating groups is challenging. It takes time and experience to understand and figure out the most appropriate methods and approaches for supporting people through change and problem solving. One of the most challenging aspects of working with teams and collaborative partnerships is figuring out how to balance the demands and expectations of individuals, the team or partners, and external stakeholders and constituencies (Black et al. 2019). Developing a checklist to identify people relevant to a particular effort or cause helps practitioners manage and facilitate the group process as well as ensure optimal performance for leading change. Some checklist questions to consider include:

- Whose participation and support do we need to identify the issue or condition and solve the problem?
- Who needs my support? What do they need from me or the team or collaborators?
- Who can keep me and our team or effort from being successful?
- What is my ongoing strategy to motivate, engage, and influence change?

The answers to these questions are important in guiding and building the relationships we need to develop for social change. The primary role of sociological practitioners is to build and manage relationships with people who will support the team and their work (Black et al. 2019). This is the politics of sociological practice meaning practitioners must develop interpersonal skills to bridge people and shape strong working relationships.



Figure 3: This image "People Sitting around Brown Wooden Table under White Pendant Lamp Inside Room" by Christine Morillo is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Acting as a facilitator, a sociological practitioner must demonstrate leadership skills. The practitioner often serves as an orchestrator or person that arranges and helps set the tone for a group to push on and accomplish its goals (Black et al. 2019). The process of leadership is different from being a leader or head of a group. **Leadership** is a working relationship with group members directed at achieving the needs of the team in problem solving and change. The act of leadership is an exchange relationship among group members and the practitioner to influence each other and the context or condition the collaborators are addressing.

Several characteristics endow people with leadership potential (Kirkpatrick and Locke 1991; Kirkpatrick and Locke 2000; and Locke et al. 1991). The common traits of effective leadership include:

- Drive or a strong desire to achieve accompanied with ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative
- Motivation to lead others
- Commitment to truth, honesty, and integrity
- Self-confidence or assurance in one's self, ideas, and ability
- Cognitive ability or analytical ability to think conceptually and strategically
- Industry knowledge or understanding of the community and social conditions or needs
- Miscellaneous traits such as charisma, creativity, flexibility, and self-monitoring or alter one's behavior in context to social cues as necessary

Sociological practice emphasizes a **transformational leadership** style where the focus is on inspiring others to action and helping people understand they can influence outcomes. Transformational leadership centers on engaging and energizing others through procedural justice whereby people effected by a condition or issue play an equitable role in confronting or solving the problem (Pillai, Schriesheim, and Williams 1999). This form of leadership motivates individuals to transcend their own centric thinking or self-interest for the benefit of the group, community, and society (Manz and Sims 1987). Through this process, collaborators focus on higher-order needs such as self-esteem, self-actualization, and get a voice in influencing decisions and outcomes that effect and are important to them.



Figure 4: This image "Boy and Girl Sitting on Bench Toy" by June Intharoek is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Interpersonal conflict involves situations when a person or group blocks expectations, ideas, or goals of another person or group. Conflict develops when people or groups desire different outcomes, opinions, offend one another, or simply do not get along (Black, et al. 2019). People tend to assume conflict is bad and must be eradicated. However, a moderate amount of conflict can be helpful in some cases. For example, conflict can lead people to discover new ideas and new ways of identifying solutions to social problems or conditions and is often the very mechanism to inspire innovation and change. It can also facilitate motivation among clients, communities, and organizations to excel and push themselves in order to meet outcomes and objectives (Black et al. 2019). According to Coser (1956), conflict is likely to have stabilizing and unifying functions for a relationship in its pursuit for resolution. People and social systems readjust their structures to eliminate dissatisfaction to re-establish unity.

The appropriate **conflict resolution** approach depends on the situation and the goals of the people involved. According to Thomas (1977), each faction or party involved in the conflict must decide the extent to which it is interested in satisfying its own concerns categorized as **assertiveness** and satisfying their opponent's concerns known as **cooperativeness** (Black et al. 2019). Assertiveness can range on a continuum from assertive to unassertive, and cooperativeness can range on a continuum from uncooperative to cooperative. Once the people involved in the conflict have determined their level of assertiveness and cooperativeness, a resolution strategy emerges.

In the conflict resolution process, competing individuals or groups determine the extent to which a satisfactory resolution or outcome might be achieved. If someone does not feel satisfied or feels only partially satisfied with a resolution, discontent can lead to future conflict. An unresolved conflict can easily set the stage for a second confrontational episode (Black et al. 2019).

Sociological practitioners can use several techniques to help prevent or reduce conflict. Actions directed at conflict prevention are often easier to implement than those directed at reducing conflict (Black et al. 2019). Common **conflict prevention strategies** include emphasizing collaborative goals, constructing structured tasks, facilitating intergroup communications, and avoiding win-lose situations. Focusing on collaborative goals and objectives prevents goal conflict (Black et al. 2019). Emphasis on primary goals help clients and community members see the big picture and work together. This approach separates people from the problem by maintaining focus on shared interests (Fisher and Ury 1981). The overarching goal is to work together to address the structure of the overarching social concern or issue.

Table 6. Five Modes of Resolving Conflict. Source: Adapted from Thomas, Kenneth W. 1977. "Toward Multidimensional Values in Teaching: The Example of Conflict Behaviors." *Academy of Management Review* 2:487. Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

Conflict-Handling Modes	Appropriate Situations
Competing (Assertive-Uncooperative)	1. When quick, decisive action is vital—e.g., emergencies 2. On important issues where unpopular actions need implementing—e.g., cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline 3. On issues vital to company welfare when you know you're right 4. Against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior
Collaborating (Assertive-Cooperative)	1. When trying to find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised 2. When your objective is to learn 3. When merging insights from people with different perspectives 4. When gaining commitment by incorporating concerns into a consensus 5. When working through feelings that have interfered with a relationship

Conflict-Handling Modes	Appropriate Situations
Compromising	1. When goals are important but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes 2. When opponents with equal power are committed to mutually exclusive goals 3. When attempting to achieve temporary settlements to complex issues 4. When arriving at expedient solutions under time pressure 5. As a backup when collaboration or competition is unsuccessful
Avoiding (Unassertive-Uncooperative)	1. When an issue is trivial, or when more important issues are pressing 2. When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns 3. When potential disruption outweighs the benefits of resolution 4. When letting people cool down and regain perspective 5. When gathering information supersedes immediate decision 6. When others can resolve the conflict more effectively 7. When issues seem tangential or symptomatic of other issues
Accommodating (Unassertive-Cooperative)	1. When you find you are wrong—to allow a better position to be heard, to learn, and to show your reasonableness 2. When issues are more important to others than yourself—to satisfy others and maintain cooperation 3. When building social credits for later issues 4. When minimizing loss when you are outmatched and losing 5. When harmony and stability are especially important 6. When allowing subordinates to develop by learning from mistakes

When collaborative partners clearly define, understand, and accept tasks and activities aimed at shared goals, conflict is less likely to occur (Black et al. 2019). Conflict is most likely to occur when there is uncertainty and ambiguity in the roles and tasks of clients and community members. Dialogue and information sharing among collaborative partners is imperative and eliminates conflict. Understanding others' thinking is helpful in collaborative problem solving. Through dialogue people, are better able to develop empathy, avoid speculation or misinterpreting intentions, and escape blaming others for situations and problems which leads to defensive behavior and counter attacks (Fisher and Ury 1981). Sharing information about the state, progress, and setbacks helps eliminate conflict or suspicions about problems or issues when they arise.



Figure 5: This image "Two Women Chatting" by mentatdgt is licensed under CC BY 4.0

As clients and community partners become familiar with each other, trust and teamwork develops. Giving people time to interact and get to know each other helps foster and build effective working relationships (Fisher and Ury 1981). It is important for team members to think of themselves as partners in a side-by-side effort to be effective in their work and accomplish shared goals. Avoiding win-lose situations among collaborative partners also weakens the potential for conflict (Black et al. 2019). Rewards and solutions must focus on shared benefits resulting in win-win scenarios.

Conflict can have a negative impact on teams or collaborative work groups and individuals in achieving their goals and solving social issues. Sociological practitioners cannot always avoid or protect people from conflict when working collaboratively. However, there are actions practitioners can take to reduce or solve dysfunctional conflict.

When conflict arises, sociological practitioners may employ two general approaches by either targeting changes in attitudes and/or behaviors. Changes in attitudes result in fundamental changes in how groups get along, whereas changes in behavior reduces open conflict but not internal perceptions maintaining separation between groups (Black et at. 2019). There are several ways to help reduce conflict between groups and individuals that either address attitudinal and/or behavioral changes. The nine **conflict reduction techniques** in Table 2 operate on a continuum, ranging from approaches that concentrate on changing behaviors at the top of the scale to tactics that focus on changing attitudes on the bottom of the scale.

Table 7. Conflict Reduction Techniques. Source: Adapted from Black, J. Stewart, David S. Bright, Donald G. Gardner, Eva Hartmann, Jason Lambert, Laura M. Leduc, Joy Leopold, James S. O'Rourke, Jon L. Pierce, Richard M. Steers, Siri Terjesen, and Joseph Weiss. 2019. *Organizational Behavior*. Houston, TX: OpenStax College. Attribution: Copyright Rice University, OpenStax, under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

Technique	Description	Target of Change
Physical separation	Separate conflicting groups when collaboration or interaction is not needed for completing tasks and activities	Behavior
Use rules	Introduce specific rules, regulations, and procedures that imposes particular processes, approaches, and methods for working together	Behavior
Limit intergroup interactions	Limit interactions to issues involving common goals	Behavior
Use diplomats	Identify individuals who will be responsible for maintaining boundaries between groups or individuals through diplomacy	Behavior
Confrontation and negotiation	Bring conflicting parties together to discuss areas of disagreement and identify win-win solutions for all	Attitude and behavior
Third-party consultation	Bring in outside practitioners or consultants to speak more directly to the issues from a neutral or outsider vantage point to help facilitate a resolution	Attitude and behavior
Rotation of members	Rotate individuals from one group to another to help understand frame of reference, values, and attitudes of others	Attitude and behavior
Identify interdependent tasks and common goals	Establish goals that require groups and individuals to work together	Attitude and behavior
Use of intergroup training	Long-term, ongoing training aimed at helping groups develop methods for working together	Attitude and behavior

LEADING A TEAM

1. Describe a time you held a leadership position among your family, friends, at school, or with co-workers.
2. In reflecting back on the skills and competencies presented in the module, did you use any of them in the leadership position you described? Explain.
3. Which skills and competencies from the module do you think are the most important in leading others?

Other Abilities and Proficiencies

Working as a sociological practitioner, you must develop knowledge and historical information about the social problem you wish to address, the nature or origin of the condition, and possible methods for solving the issue (Lau and Chan 2019). Understanding a social problem aids in formulating the structure and approach to tackling it. This also ensures change agents are targeting and developing an accurate plan to address the "real" problem or issue.

Solving problems requires critical and creative thinking. **Critical thinking** is the process of reflection and questioning aimed at confronting assumptions, examining context, and investigating alternatives (Brookfield 1986; Tice 2000). This process emphasizes assessment of one's thoughts and interpretation of thoughts to validity, authenticity, and accuracy of understanding and reasoning. **Creative thinking** supports critical thinking as a process of developing new and useful possibilities to one's thoughts (Lau and Chan 2019). Creative thinking aids in discovering new or alternative ideas and options. The inventive qualities of creative thinking aids sociological practitioners in constructing potential solutions to social problems.

In addition, when working toward social change, practitioners and collaborators must employ strategic thinking. This cognitive activity improves decision-making, strengthens the ability to cope with change, and instills a mentality of continuous improvement. **Strategic thinking** is a critical thinking process people use to analyze, evaluate, and problem solve. The application of this process challenges conventional thought by emphasizing foresight or predicting human responses and outcomes. Strategic thinking requires aptitude in self-development (e.g., learning new skills and overcoming bad habits), organizational strategies that are productive and responsive to challenges and innovations, and tactical thinking to deal with confrontation, competition, maximize impact, and protect selves (Lau and Chan 2019). The purpose of strategic thinking in addressing social problems is to establish a systems perspective focusing on client needs and the barriers preventing success or change.

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTITIONER QUALITIES

Below are a list of general traits and skills needed in the field of sociology. Review the items and complete a self-assessment for further preparation as a sociological practitioner. These items will give you a sense of where your strengths are and what you have to offer clients, communities, and employers.

_____ I am comfortable speaking with and in front of people.

_____ I am authentic and self-confident when working with others.

_____ I have effective written and oral communication skills.

_____ I am not afraid to say "no" or disappointing someone.

_____ I am self- motivated and self-disciplined to complete my work on time.

_____ I accept criticism and am willing to learn from my mistakes.

_____ I am aware of my personal and professional weaknesses and strengths.

_____ I have strong organizational skills (i.e., time management, recordkeeping, meeting deadlines, etc.).

_____ I am flexible and tolerant when working with others.

_____ I am able to reflect and synthesize what others share with me.

_____ I am able to work collaboratively or on a team.

_____ I am able to manage conflict without getting defensive.

_____ I am able to use a variety of data collection, analysis, and reporting methods.

_____ I am able to use software (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, statistical analysis (SPSS or Nvivo, etc.) for creating, recording, and presenting data and reports.

_____ I can apply a variety of theoretical models and approaches to solving social problems.

EXPLORING SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTITIONER METHODS AND SKILLS

1. Review the **Public Sociology Toolkit (**https://publicsociologytoolkit.com/public-sociology-toolkit/).
2. Explore each of the 18 methods and skills sociological practitioners use to investigate social issues and work to create social change.

3. Think about a social problem that is important to you and describe how a team of practitioners, clients, and community stakeholders might **apply each of the 18 methods** in the toolkit to improve the social condition you identified.

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10.4.7.1: Practice Competencies

Chapter Seven Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand what Community Psychology practice competencies are
- Find out why Community Psychology practice competencies are important
- Learn how to develop your own Community Psychology competencies



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Every job requires a specific set of skills and knowledge, and **Community Psychology** is no different. In this chapter, you will find a set of knowledge and skills that a Community Psychology practitioner needs. It starts by describing what "practice competency" means and why it is important. After presenting a brief overview of where the competencies came from and the levels of competence, the chapter will provide information about what each competency means, case examples of the competencies being used, how someone can become competent, resources related to each competency, and some self-reflection and critical thinking questions.

Case Study 7.1
A Community Psychology Consultant and Her Competencies



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A Community Psychology consultant just received a contract to build collaboratives to promote well-being in five rural communities. In this role, she will provide guidance and technical assistance to help the coalitions recruit historically excluded community residents, conduct a needs assessment, and use the results to develop a plan for systems-level change. When she visits these communities, she discovers that some coalitions have formed without including the historically excluded residents; three of the counties have no idea where to begin, two counties have long histories of racism and segregation, and all the counties are resource-poor in terms of health, mental health, housing, employment, transportation, and many other basic needs. The Community Psychology consultant realizes that she is going to need all the knowledge and skills she developed throughout her training and employment experiences. As you read through this chapter, reflect upon each competency and think about how it could be applied for the Community Psychology consultant's work with these collaboratives.

THE ROLE OF COMPETENCIES IN COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY



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You might be wondering, what does "*practice competency*" mean? The **Community Psychology practice competencies** were developed to provide a common framework to describe the skills involved in Community Psychology practice (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012). It means that someone who is a Community Psychology practitioner has mastered some or all these skills and knowledge to

some extent. Community Psychology practice competency means that the community psychologist has mastered enough of the skills to implement their work in real life situations dealing with individuals and communities in need.

Why “practice competencies” and why is this important to the work that we do? When students are deciding on their careers and what to study in college or graduate school, they usually focus on the type of work they would like to do first. The next step is to find out what degree will give them the skills needed for the work they want to do. The Community Psychology practice competencies accurately reflect the set of skills students can obtain if they get a degree in this field. Another reason having a list of competencies is important is that graduates of Community Psychology programs can easily describe their skills to potential employers. Alternately, potential employers who have job openings that require these skills will know that they need to look for in someone who is trained in Community Psychology. A common vocabulary amongst practitioners, communities, and employers will help everyone to know what to expect when working with community psychologists (Neigher & Ratcliffe, 2010).

Where did these practice competencies come from? The competencies were created collaboratively by a task group made up of members of the Society for Community Research and Action’s (SCRA) Community Psychology Practice Council and Council of Education programs. They began the work in 2010 and after many iterations and reviews, the list of competencies was approved by the **SCRA's** Executive Committee in 2012.

What levels of competence are there? As with any field of study, an individual can develop any of the Community Psychology practice competencies to a different level of mastery. The first level is “**exposure**” which means that they have learned about the competencies and how it can be applied in practice. At the next level, “**experience**,” the community psychologist has actually used the competencies in supervised practice, or practice on their own, to perform the tasks related to the competency. “**Expertise**” means the community psychologist has had several experiences with applying the competencies in work and developed a high level of skill.

To whom do these competencies apply? While many of these competencies apply to community psychologists all over the world, this particular set of competencies in their entirety apply primarily to community psychologists practicing in the US. Community psychologists in other countries sometimes need different skills in their work because of cultural, economic, legal, political, or other differences.

THE COMPETENCIES



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Foundational Principles

The foundational principles are the five competencies that all Community Psychology practitioners working in the US need, listed in Table 1 below. They represent knowledge, skills, and principles that help to guide practice work from a Community Psychology perspective, as well as the values and perspectives of Community Psychology and the competencies needed to apply the values in practice, as also indicated in the first chapter (Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019). These competencies are combined with the remaining more technical skills-based competencies to ensure they are exercised using a Community Psychology approach. Elias, Neigher, and Johnson-Hakim (2015) suggest that you think of them as "foreground" processes because Community Psychology practitioners need to pay constant attention to these principles and make sure that their actions align with them.



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For example, in our case study, the Community Psychology practitioner will need to work with communities to develop their coalitions. There are many coalitions in place across most communities in the US, but when the Community Psychology practitioner works with the communities to develop their coalitions, they will be sure they include community members and develop structures that **empower** the historically excluded populations to lead the coalitions and determine the actions to be taken on their own behalf. This contrasts with coalitions that typically include professionals who make decisions and take action from outside the community.

Table 1. *Foundational Principles Competencies Defined and Described*	
Ecological Perspectives: The ability to articulate and apply multiple ecological perspectives and levels of analysis in community practice.	**Skill 1**. Articulate and apply an ecological systems perspective, considering multiple contextual factors at multiple levels, to understand community organizational issues. **Skill 2**. Identify processes of interdependence, resource exchange, adaptation, and succession in settings and communities. **Skill 3**. Address multiple ecological levels, resources, and processes to design, implement, and evaluate community and social action initiatives. **Skill 4**. Articulate and apply ecological systems perspective in relation to other competencies for practice.
Empowerment: The ability to articulate and apply a collective empowerment perspective, to support communities that have been marginalized in their efforts to gain access to resources, and to participate in community decision-making.	**Skill 1**. Promote exercising greater power for communities that have been marginalized. **Skill 2**. Articulate and promote collective empowerment among individuals working together to achieve shared goals through meaningful community engagement.
	Skill 3. Enact empowering processes through working in genuine, inclusive partnerships with community members and organizations. **Skill 4**. Support diverse, contextual forms of collective empowerment appropriate for different communities. **Skill 5**. Articulate and apply empowerment principles in relation to other competencies for practice.
Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence: The ability to value, integrate, and bridge multiple worldviews, cultures, and identities.	**Skill 1**. Define one's own worldview, culture, and identity, and how those influence one's assumptions and interactions with the focal community context. **Skill 2**. Articulate how dynamics of culture, privilege, and power influence interactions within the focal community context, including one's own interactions. **Skill 3**. Analyze social inequity and power imbalances. **Skill 4**. Assess cultural, social structural, ecological process, and empowerment dynamics in the focal community and use the assessment to inform community building and advocacy. **Skill 5**. Form relationships with individuals across diverse cultures and social positions to address

	community issues in inclusive, empowering, culturally valid ways.
Community Inclusion and Partnership: The ability to promote genuine representation and respect for all community members, and act to legitimize divergent perspectives on community and social issues.	**Skill 1**. Apply ecological, empowerment, and cross-cultural principles to processes and interpersonal relationships when working with community members. **Skill 2**. Make positions of power and privilege transparent, and work to facilitate empowerment among those with less power and privilege. **Skill 3**. Develop avenues for respectful dialogue and listening and promote this dialogue through one's own actions. **Skill 4**. Identify and act upon opportunities for mutual support.
Ethical, Reflective Practice: Engage in a process of continual ethical improvement.	**Skill 1**. Identify ethical issues in one's practice and act to address them responsibly. **Skill 2**. Articulate how one's own values, assumptions, and life experiences influence one's work, and articulate the strengths and limitations of one's own perspective. **Skill 3**. Develop and maintain professional networks for ethical consultation and support.

Community Program Development and Management



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This set of two competencies include a large skill set whereby Community Psychology practitioners can partner with community stakeholders from start to finish to develop and implement programs in their communities to meet identified needs, to **prevent** problems, and to promote health (See Table 2). The case study at the beginning of this chapter mentions that the communities are resource poor. If the collaborative decides they need to create after-school programs for youth, then the Community Psychology consultant may use the particular skills connected with community program development and management to help them with program design and implementation.

Table 2. *Community Program Development and Management Competencies Defined and Described*	
Program Development, Implementation, and Management: The ability to partner with community stakeholders to plan, develop, implement, and sustain programs in community settings	**Skill 1**. Assess community issues, needs, strengths, and resources. **Skill 2**. Create and sustain inclusive partnerships with stakeholders and community members. **Skill 3**. Work with community partners to formulate program goals with measurable desired outcomes and impacts; design and implement a program to attain identified goals and fit the community context; ensure cultural and contextual appropriateness of program; recruit, train, and support program staff; and ensure program sustainability.
Prevention and Health Promotion: The ability to articulate and implement a prevention perspective, and to implement prevention and health promotion community programs.	**Skill 1**. Articulate a community intervention perspective focused on preventing problems and promoting health and other positive outcomes. **Skill 2**. Identify multi-level resources and challenges for prevention efforts. **Skill 3**. Work with community partners to develop multi-level prevention programs that link prevention initiatives to policy initiatives and to setting or community change.

Community and Organizational Capacity-Building



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One hallmark of Community Psychology practice is that instead of going into communities and acting on their behalf, Community Psychology practitioners work to strengthen communities so they can act on their own behalf. This requires a strong, trusting relationship between the community psychologist and the various stakeholders, such as community partners, advocates, members of the target population, treatment providers, and governmental entities (Elias, Neigher, & Johnson-Hakim, 2015). If Community Psychology practitioners are successful in their work, communities they work in should eventually not need their help at all. The goal is to create change which is then adopted by the community and managed by the community members to the point where they sustain it over time. This is really important for working in disadvantaged communities that have been traditionally disempowered. By giving away our skills and knowledge, we empower them to make the changes their communities need and reduce their reliance on outside professionals. These four competencies are designed to help us do that (see Table 3). When the Community Psychology consultant in our first case study goes into the communities to work with them to build their collaboratives, she will not do any of the work for them. She will provide training and technical assistance to strengthen the skills and capacity of the community members to build and maintain their collaborative.

Table 3. *Community and Organizational Capacity-Building Competencies Defined and Described*		
Community Leadership and Mentoring	**Leadership**: The ability to enhance the capacity of individuals and groups to lead effectively, by collaboratively engaging, energizing, and mobilizing individuals and groups regarding an issue of shared importance.	**Skill 1**. Establish trust relationships with community leaders and members. **Skill 2**. Work with emerging local leaders to interpret the issues they are facing, and the differing factions, stakeholders, and priorities involved in those issues. **Skill 3**. Work across different factions to address an issue productively. **Skill 4**. Support and consult with emerging local leaders in their planning and implementation of actions to address an issue.
	Mentoring: The ability to assist community members to identify personal strengths and social and structural resources they can develop further and use to enhance empowerment, community engagement, and leadership.	**Skill 1**. Advise, model, and support community leaders, to help them identify and use their own best style of collaborative leadership. **Skill 2**. Teach and facilitate effective methods of energizing others to participate in community issues. **Skill 3**. Encourage critical feedback, models, and practice critical reflection on one's own work. **Skill 4**. Adapt one's own style of collaborative leadership to community issues, cultures, and context.
Small and Large Group Process: The ability to intervene in small and large group processes to facilitate the capacity of community groups to work together productively.	**Skill 1**. Utilize effective interpersonal communication skills. **Skill 2**. Facilitate meetings, group decision-making, and consensus building. **Skill 3**. Provide conflict analysis, assist with conflict resolution.	

Resource Development: The ability to identify and integrate use of human and material resources, including community assets and social capital.	**Skill 1**. Conduct a community assessment of needs, resources, and assets that facilitate organizational and program sustainability. **Skill 2**. Translate knowledge of needs and assets into specific funding aims. **Skill 3**. Develop relationships and partnerships with funding agencies, organizations, and foundations. **Skill 4**. Utilize effective grant writing and fundraising skills. **Skill 5**. Build capacity to ensure compliance with requirements of grants and resources received. **Skill 6**. Develop and present an evaluation plan.
Consultation and Organizational Development: The ability to facilitate growth of an organization's capacity to attain its goals.	**Skill 1**. Assess organizational capacity, issues, needs, and assets. **Skill 2**. Create and sustain effective partnerships with organization members. **Skill 3**. Facilitate organizational learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. **Skill 4**. Facilitate collaborative strategic planning of organizational goals, desired outcomes, and action initiatives.

Community and Social Change



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Typically, when there is a problem in a community, we address it by creating another program to help solve some of the issues that have arisen. For example, in one community the response to childhood obesity was to teach children and parents how to improve their diet and exercise. Nobody would dispute that this is helpful information for all people to have. That said, what happens when parents want to fix healthy meals for their children, but they don't have access to the food they need to make them? Or, what if they don't have a car and there is no grocery store in their neighborhood? And what if a family can't get out to walk or ride bicycles or get exercise of some kind because they live in a neighborhood where there are no sidewalks to walk on, or it isn't safe because of high crime? Many of our social problems cannot be fixed by working to change people's behavior, especially if they live or work in environments that won't support their behavior changes. We need to have the skills to change systems, policies, and the environments in which people live. This set of five competencies provides Community Psychology practitioners with the skills to make these changes to create second-order change processes that focus on ways to rearrange current relationships, roles, and power dynamics within a setting (see Table 4). The goal is to establish a more just, inclusive, and health-promoting environment (Elias, Neigher, & Johnson-Hakim, 2015). The Community Psychology consultant in the Case Study 7.1 will need these skills to help the collaboratives build their own skills to change systems, and not just focus on creating programs.

Table 4. *Community and Social Change Competencies Defined and Described*	
Collaboration and Coalition Development: The ability to help groups with common interests and goals to do together what they cannot do apart.	**Skill 1**. Develop and maintain a network of constructive work partnerships with clients, residents, organizations, communities, and other stakeholders. **Skill 2**. Communicate the value of community members' lived, experiential knowledge, especially those most affected by an issue, and facilitate use of that knowledge in coalition work. **Skill 3**. Facilitate inclusive coalition membership and discussion that represents views of all segments of the community. **Skill 4**. Facilitate community member efforts to identify community issues, resources, and goals for collective action. **Skill 5**. Negotiate goals of work and mediate partnerships for collective actions.
Community Development: The ability to help a community develop a vision and take actions toward becoming a healthy community.	**Skill 1**. Facilitate community participation in community improvement efforts and decision-making.
	Skill 2. Enhance the development of community leadership. **Skill 3**. Facilitate community efforts to identify community issues, resources, and goals for collective action. **Skill 4**. Promote sustainability, self-sufficiency, and empowerment of community-led organizations.
Community Organizing and Community Advocacy: The ability to work collaboratively with community members to gain the power to improve conditions affecting their community.	**Skill 1**. Facilitate community efforts to identify community issues, resources, and goals for collective action. **Skill 2**. Help organize collective efforts by community members and facilitate community building of action plans. **Skill 3**. Assist community members to take sustained collective action to bring about systems change.
Public Policy Analysis, Development, and Advocacy: The ability to build and sustain effective communication and working relationships with policy makers, elected officials, and community leaders.	**Skill 1**. Write policy briefs, present testimony, draft policies, and consult with policy makers at federal, state/province, and local levels. **Skill 2**. Translate research findings into useful policy information and recommendations. **Skill 3**. Build coalitions to advocate for policy changes.

Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness: The ability to communicate information to various segments of the public, to strengthen competencies and awareness, or for advocacy.	**Skill 1**. Provide information to community members through educational approaches to strengthen their capacity for independent action and to empower them to act on behalf of other community members. **Skill 2**. Engage diverse groups in dialogue about information through consultation, public speaking, writing, and social media, and media. **Skill 3**. Systematically identify stakeholders to receive information and tailor messages for their use. **Skill 4**. Use training and technical assistance to develop individual and organizational capacity to use innovation. **Skill 5**. Identify different stakeholders' interests, tailor messages and the medium for each stakeholder audience, evaluate dissemination and use of information, re-evaluate stakeholder needs and interests, and revise programs as needed.

Case Study 7.2
The Community Driven Development of The Gateway



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There is much one can do with Community Psychology practice competencies focusing on community and social change, even outside the field itself. Debi Starnes has served in elected positions in the local government of Atlanta, Georgia and has also held key policy advisory roles over the course of her career (Scott & Wolfe, 2015). Dually trained in both clinical psychology and community/organizing psychology, Debi was actively involved in various leadership roles in her community. She understood the importance of being an active member of her community regardless of her education. In fact, she said, "I didn't get elected because I was a community psychologist, but being a community psychologist helped enormously in my perspective and how I approached different issues and tasks," when serving as an elected official. During her 11-year career as a city council member, Debi was able to develop a Homeless Action Group, which brought together a wide variety of community members and groups to talk about and address issues facing people experiencing homelessness. Debi used her skills and was able to practice community and organizational capacity-building while enacting community and social change in a different role than a practitioner. Due to her efforts, the city developed The Gateway, a central intake and assessment facility that provided vital housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. This successful program required collaboration between city officials, business leaders, treatment providers, law enforcement, and community members. Debi was able to use her training and expertise, as well as her dedication to community service, to bring these groups together and enact social change. Find out more about The Gateway program.

Community Research



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These last two competencies allow Community Psychology practitioners to learn about the communities they work with, and to determine whether what they have done has made a difference. Unlike more traditional research, community psychologists do

research and evaluate programs *with* community members rather than *on* or *about* them. They use their scientific set of skills to collect and analyze data to help communities answer their questions, evaluate what they are doing, and use research to plan, learn, and make decisions. The community consultant will need research and evaluation skills to help communities to conduct needs assessments and gather data to use for planning and to evaluate the outcomes of their initiatives.

There are so many advantages when community psychologists collaborate with community members and organizations. These types of collaborations can provide mutual benefits to the investigators as well as the community members, and help get the word out regarding new innovative ways of delivering services. The following Case Study 7.3 provides some glimpses of interactions that occurred during a 25-year collaborative relationship between a DePaul University group and the Oxford House recovery organization. By having members of the recovery community guide the types of questions that were asked, the research helped capture more crucial aspects of the changes that were occurring among residents.

Case Study 7.3
Community Partners Identifying Areas for Research



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During one of the annual Oxford House conventions, an individual living in one of these homes approached Leonard Jason, one of the DePaul University investigators and suggested that measures of tolerance be included in this collaborative research. He explained that prior to living in an Oxford House, he had been very prejudiced against people who were different from him, such as people who were HIV positive. But while in Oxford House, he met a woman who was HIV positive; she was now his girlfriend. He wanted to point out that, for him, living in Oxford House went beyond staying clean and sober—it made him a more accepting and generous person. That participatory input led to a series of mixed methods investigations, which allowed both the community members and university researchers to better understand the rich experiences and outcomes of residents living in these recovery houses. For example, in one randomized study, with individuals being assigned to an Oxford House or usual aftercare condition, over time, those assigned to the Oxford House condition demonstrated significantly greater values of tolerance than usual aftercare participants. These changes occurred due to living in a recovery setting where members could share time with one another, exchange life stories, discuss their prior drug use, talk about personal and group goals, enjoying eating and attending 12-step meetings, and participating in a variety of non-substance use social outings. With this type of involvement, it is likely that a sense of cohesion developed which led to increases in tolerance (Olson, & Jason, 2015).

This type of collaborative research led to the non-profit being endorsed by the federal government as the current “gold standard” for residential aftercare. Receiving this recognition from the federal government helped this community organization expand to now serving over 20,000 individuals in recovery.

An important element of community research and action in practice is the dissemination of successful interventions that have benefited communities (Scott, & Wolfe, 2015). Dissemination is a strategic, systematic sharing of information about an intervention or research to individuals and groups who can use this information to help the people they work with. The goals are to influence policy and change community psychologists’ methods in an area of practice so it is of greater benefit to the populations they are working with. An even more concentrated form of dissemination is **implementation**, or “the use of strategies to adopt and integrate evidence-based health interventions and change practice patterns in specific settings” (Chamber, 2009; as cited in Scott, & Wolfe, 2015). A focus on implementation leads to innovative interventions that are more effective for the groups they are meant to help. This allows the practice to advance as a whole and creates an open dialogue among practitioners to collaborate on solutions and share their work.

Table 5. *Community Research Competencies Defined and Described*	
Participatory Community Research: The ability to work with community partners to plan and conduct research that meets high standards of scientific evidence that are contextually appropriate, and to communicate the findings of that research in ways that promote community capacity to pursue community goals.	**Skill 1**. Provide communities with information regarding expectations of funding agencies and other stakeholders regarding scientific methods and research. **Skill 2**. Work with community groups to develop research and evaluation designs that balance the values of the community with scientific standards. **Skill 3**. Employ diverse and rigorous methods to conduct research that is collaborative and inclusive, engaging community members throughout the research process. **Skill 4**. Conduct assessments of community issues, needs, and assets, using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods in partnership with community members and organizations. **Skill 5**. Use qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods appropriate to the context and purposes of the community research. **Skill 6**. Employ data analytic approaches that account for multi-level contextual influences on behavior, use variable-centered or person-centered approaches as appropriate, and examine influences longitudinally. **Skill 7**. Communicate findings and translate research in a way that has utility for practitioners and all relevant stakeholders. **Skill 8**. Use research-based information to promote community and organizational learning, shared decision making, and collective empowerment. **Skill 9**. Utilize effective grant-writing skills and build capacity to ensure compliance with requirements of grants and contracts.
Program Evaluation: The ability to partner with community leaders and members to promote program improvement and program accountability to stakeholders and funders.	**Skill 1**. Develop culturally and linguistically competent program evaluation methods appropriate for program context. **Skill 2**. When relevant, teach data collection procedures to community members. **Skill 3**. Collect, analyze, and report appropriate evaluation data. **Skill 4**. Integrate evaluation findings into ongoing program development. **Skill 5**. Conduct program evaluations that adhere to professionally accepted standards of practice, including utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and accountability.

But why should community psychologists in practice share what they find with each other? Well, this is because practitioners have to keep sustainability in mind as they are developing and implementing programs. This is especially true if a program is a success because the goal is to change best practices and policies so that the methods can be used to help more people and be spread to other locations. Focusing on sustainability can ensure that an effective program, intervention, or research finding is preserved and continues to affect practice and public policy, even after the practitioner has started working on something else. If a practitioner does not account for sustainability, it can lead to the old adage of "history repeating itself," as their intervention and findings are ignored and lost over time.

The case study below will highlight the importance of sharing the methodology with peers in the field with a focus on dissemination and sustainability.

Case Study 7.4
The Fairweather Lodge and a Successful Dissemination



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/?p=738

An instructive example showcasing dissemination and sustainability is the work of Bill Fairweather and his colleagues. Fairweather's seminal work was a 25-year examination and experimentation of group problem solving with people with mental disorders living in inpatient hospital facilities (Scott & Wolfe, 2015). Fairweather wanted to understand, through experimentation, how to give people in these institutional settings some semblance of freedom in the real world. Fairweather and his colleagues understood the importance of empowerment and community integration, and recognized that this vulnerable, institutionalized group could benefit greatly from community-based living. His team spent an additional 10 years implementing a community living setting for these patients, with both work and social opportunities, called the Community Lodge. The lodge was very successful in giving patients economic, social, and interpersonal opportunities and vastly improved their quality of life. Their findings were successfully disseminated to other practitioners focusing on people with mental illness, and this led to many other works involving the importance of community living in improving people's lives.

Take a moment to think about how long it took to create this successful program for people with mental illness in hospital settings: it took 35 years total to fully understand the problem, evaluate solutions, and implement it successfully through intervention. That is quite an investment on the part of Fairweather and his colleagues, and yet they knew the importance of creating an intervention grounded in an empirical understanding of the issue and potential solutions. They wanted to make sure that their program would be effective, and they took the time to learn as much as they could before trying their lodge idea out. And they made sure to study the most effective dissemination methods to make sure their results were spread and reached a wide audience.

LEARNING AND STRENGTHENING COMPETENCIES



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The first way to learn the competencies discussed is to study Community Psychology, especially at the graduate level. As an undergraduate, there is a good chance that you have never heard of Community Psychology, as Bauer, Glantsman, Hochberg, Turner, and Jason (2017) found that most introductory psychology textbooks contain no reference to this field (but there are now ongoing efforts to change this). Many universities offer Master's level programs that train students in these competencies, or you can pursue a Ph.D. for more in-depth education. Not all Community Psychology graduate programs teach all of the competencies, so someone considering graduate education in Community Psychology should first decide what kind of work they are interested in doing, and then find a graduate program that focuses on the competencies they will need. All Community Psychology graduate programs focus on the foundational principles, but for other competencies, a prospective community psychologist should explore

programs. For example, some graduate programs focus more on community research competencies, and others on community and organizational capacity-building.

However, there are some universities that offer an undergraduate psychology degree with an emphasis on Community Psychology. These undergraduate programs are an excellent means of learning more about the field and getting the relevant experiences for graduate school or work post-graduate work. You can find a list of undergraduate Community Psychology programs here.

Sometimes you can also find these competencies taught in other academic departments. For example, Social Work programs might offer program development, implementation, and management, and public health schools offer public policy analysis, development, and **advocacy**. You might take organizational psychology classes to learn more about organizational development. You could even explore anthropology departments for more training in qualitative methods, business schools to learn more about managing people and programs, or political science to learn more about policy and government.

Once you have had exposure to the competencies, if you want to use them you will need to acquire experience. Internships and volunteer work offer opportunities to work with more experienced professionals under supervision as you gain experience. Just be really clear when you sign up that you are interested in learning more about the competency and want to get experience, so you can make sure the opportunity will support your need. Many entry-level jobs will also provide you with access to experienced individuals and opportunities to participate in supporting activities that use these competencies.

You can also look for additional outside training to further develop them. Many professional associations have professional conferences, and some of them even include pre-conference workshops and training opportunities. For example, workshops are often offered before the beginning of conferences sponsored by such organizations as SCRA, the American Psychological Association, and the American Evaluation Association. Then you can attend the actual conferences and hear presentations that describe the results of the application of these competencies.



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Attending professional conferences is also a good way to learn more about competencies and network with individuals who are using the competencies. There are large, national conferences such as the SCRA's Biennial Conferences that are held every other year. There are also regional conferences that are smaller and provide better opportunities to meet community psychologists and learn more about their work and how they apply the competencies.

Finally, look for online training opportunities as well. There are free online courses offered through Coursera; online training through professional associations; and opportunities through private organizations, such as The Evaluator's Institute. There are often online certifications available through various universities. For example, Michigan State University offers an online Program Evaluation Certification. The Community Tool Box, which was developed by a group of community psychologists, offers a large amount of information and resources to develop the Community Psychology practice competencies.

You can also read The Community Psychologist to learn about recent research, practice, and programs developed by community psychologists. There are specific issues of *The Community Psychologist* that deal with competencies in the Spring and Fall 2010 issues of the Community Psychologist (The Joint Council of Education and Community Practitioner) that are about building competency for collaboration with citizens and communities and group processes. Also, the Spring 2011 column is about building **Leadership** and **Mentoring** competence and the Spring 2013 column is about policy analysis, development, and advocacy. There is also The Community Psychology website, where you can learn much more about the field.

SUMMING UP



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Developing expertise in any of the Community Psychology practice competencies requires a combination of education, extra training and skill building, mentorship, and experience. Keep in mind that no matter how much anyone learns and develops expertise for any one of the competencies, there is always more to learn. It is an ongoing process that unfolds throughout a Community Psychology practitioner's career.

? Critical Thought Questions

1. Which competencies do you think would be most important to you if you were a Community Psychology practitioner?
2. When you think about programs and change initiatives that have been done in your own community, how does the Community Psychology practice approach, guided by the foundational principles, differ from the approach that was taken where you live?
3. How are these competencies the same, and how are they different from competencies required in other fields of study, such as Social Work, Public Health, and evaluation?

Take the Chapter 7 Quiz

View the Chapter 7 Lecture Slides

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10.4.8: Community Interventions

Chapter Eleven Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Differentiate professionally-led versus grassroots interventions
- Understand what it means for a community intervention to be effective
- Know why a community needs to be ready for an intervention
- Be aware of the steps to implementing community interventions

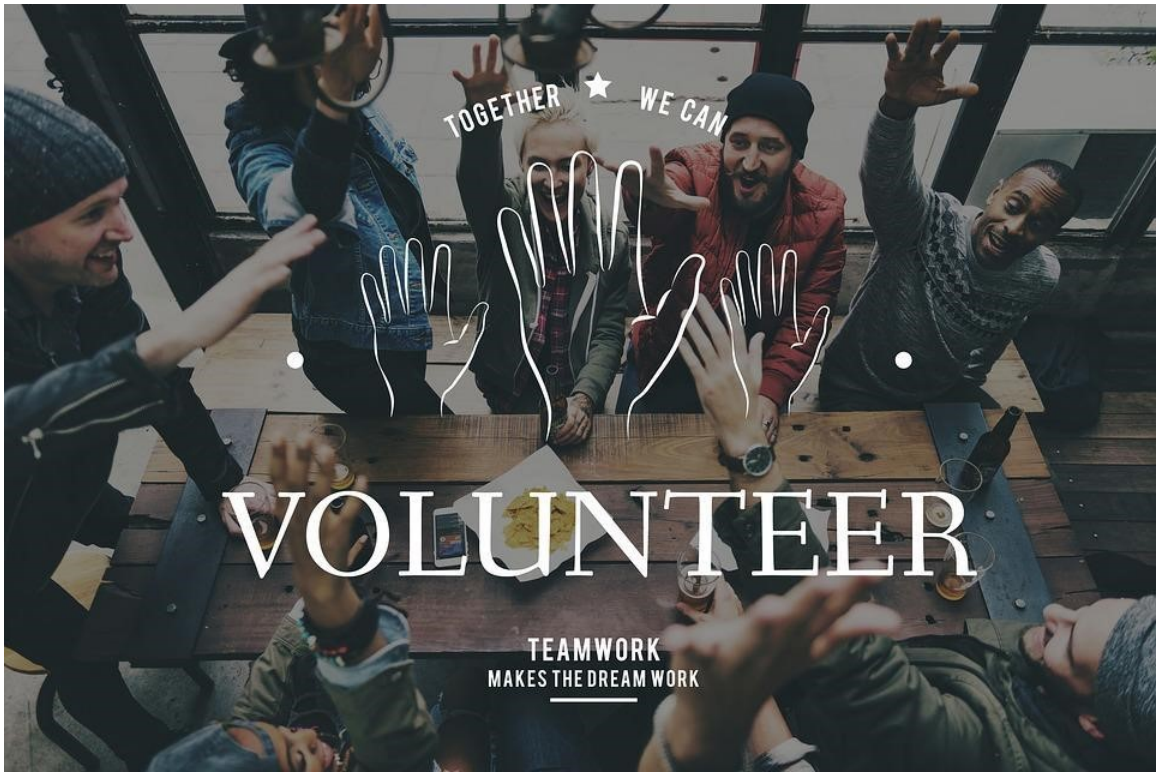


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Many older people live alone, as is the case with Antonia. Since her husband died, Antonia has been living on her own in a small apartment in the Triana neighborhood in Seville, Spain. Due to problems with her mobility, she barely leaves her home and needs help to clean her house and make food. She misses having company over to chat and hang out with. She is also afraid of falling or having an accident and is worried there is no one who can help her. A neighbor told Antonia that the University of Seville now offers a service where a student from outside the city can live with her during the academic year, in exchange for housing. Antonia decided to join this special Community Psychology oriented program and was very happy that the student could help her with household chores and accompany her on a day-to-day basis.



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The Community Service of the University of Seville in Spain has developed this community intervention program that matches university students with those who need services, including the elderly, people with disabilities, and single mothers. With this

program, students receive free housing in exchange for providing company to the people with whom they live. They are also expected to help out with small domestic tasks and provide assistance to their hosts. The program is based on models of *social support* and *mutual help*. The university helps by matching students with those who need these resources, but also provides training, guidance, and ongoing monitoring to ensure that both parties benefit from the program. By being involved in this exchange, the students develop empathy, caring skills, and communication competencies, all attributes necessary to build strong communities. The **evaluation** of the program has shown improved perceptions of available social support and improved psychological well-being among participants. This program is an example of a successful **community intervention**.

In general terms, community interventions refer to actions that address social problems or unmet human needs, and take place in a neighborhood, community, or other setting. A community intervention is, therefore, an intentional action to promote change that can be expressed in different ways depending on the needs of the community. One type of program is a more traditional type know as a *professionally-led intervention*; it involves a program planned and implemented by professionals. For example, a mental health practitioner could have visited Antonia in the example above and provided her medications to relieve her depression. A second type of intervention aligns more with the spirit of **Community Psychology**, in that it uses approaches of both participation and collaboration, called a *grassroots intervention*. This second type of community intervention involves bringing volunteers into the homes of people like Antonia, and working together to develop and provide the social support intervention. These types of programs often have recurring themes of **prevention**, **social justice**, and an **ecological** understanding of people within their environments that were described in Chapter 1 (Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019). Below we will describe in more detail the methods utilized during the *development* and *implementation* phases of both traditional and participatory community interventions.



"Glenwood Green Acres, Philadelphia" by Tony Fischer is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The first of the two types of interventions involves developing and implementing a program in a more traditional style, with a mental health professional designing and implementing the intervention. For example, a psychologist can teach a group of teenagers positive social skills so that they can confidently and voluntarily say "no" to their peers when they are encouraged to consume alcohol or other substances. A second type of intervention involves a participatory approach. For example, imagine security problems are affecting your neighborhood, and you meet with a group of neighbors to address how this issue is impacting your community. Instead of implementing preconceived and predesigned activities (e.g., the educational materials in the traditional example above), everything is decided in collaboration with the neighbors through **active citizen participation**. The intervention emerges as neighbors establish objectives (i.e., what problems they want to solve in the neighborhood) and decide what actions they can carry out together. The case study below shows how important citizen participation is for solving community problems.

Case Study 11.1
The Rochelambert Lot and Grassroots Organizing



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A grassroots movement of residents in Rochelambert, a neighborhood of Seville, formed when the city council and a company announced the construction of a private parking lot in their community. One of the neighborhood leaders explained: "Here we have

300 parking lots on the surface and the neighbors did not see the need to build a parking lot. The town hall and a promoter decided to build an underground car park, together with a building, without consulting the neighbors. We did not see the need, because, in the end, we would pay for a parking space in a place where we already had parking. So we organized ourselves. With the participation of the community presidents in each block we coordinated; each neighbor began to pay one euro per month for the expenses of posters, travel and lawyers; as we thought that the cranes would come at dawn, we made patrols during the night … The press echoed and we were clear that this battle was going to be won, that things are not imposed … I think it was important to have people in the neighborhood who had experienced the transition from dictatorship to democracy and knew the importance of political participation. The fight lasted five months, and in the end we managed to stop the parking lot. Since then we maintain friendship, because that united us a lot."

These types of bottom-up activities or **grassroots** movements are going on all the time, and it is our challenge to identify and work with these groups to promote behavioral change in defined community contexts so that social problems can be addressed. Community Psychology emphasizes the importance of community participation as a key process that improves preparation for change, contributes to community organization, and facilitates the implementation of collective actions, as the next case study below also illustrates.

Case Study 11.2

Participatory Research with Fishing Communities



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The mouth of the Guadalquivir River is part of a "hotspot of biodiversity" in southern Europe, where fishermen make their livelihood. As there were certain areas of the river that were being overfished, there was a need to address this problem. In a study with fishermen in the area, we analyzed the social networks that connect them, exchanging social support and information about the marine environment (Maya-Jariego, Florido, Holgado, & Hernández, 2016). In a later meeting, the fishing communities decided, in a participatory way, on a series of actions that they would carry out in order to conserve the fishing resources of the area. The information on the networks among the fishing community served to reflect on the preferred fishing areas of different groups of participants in the fishing community. Having an overview of the area allowed them to detect the fishing grounds that were being over-exploited so that they could self-regulate fishing practices.

In this case study, the involvement of fishing communities in the management of fisheries was essential for the effective implementation of quota policies as well as restrictions on permitted types of fishing. More information on these types of participatory approaches is available at Research for Organizing, which shows you how to use very practical toolkits for developing action efforts to solve community problems.

In the next section, we will show the importance of designing effective programs, or programs that actually work. Programs that are designed to work effectively are called "**evidence-based**," meaning that prior research has shown that these programs are successful in what they are intended to do. Another essential feature of community interventions is that they are implemented interventions to meet the needs and interests of the community. We will show how the outcomes of the intervention depend, in part, on the degree of readiness for change in the community. This means that the community members are generally excited about the intervention and committed to seeing the program through. Finally, community interventions are *implemented successfully* when the community psychologists have the necessary skills and abilities to work collaboratively with community members to make effective, long-lasting changes.



Figure 1. "Flowchart-sm" by Bates98 is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0; Modified from original

EFFECTIVENESS



"FEMA workers in a meeting in Puerto Rico" by FEMA/Andrea Booher is licensed under Public Domain



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The logic of **effectiveness** is strongly rooted in the tradition of Kurt Lewin's (1946) action research. His work involved improving intergroup relations and preventing discrimination, and it helped us understand the importance of using solid research methods and outcome studies to support our work. The key for improving effectiveness is to base programs on previous research evidence and to apply strategies of further research to support the effectiveness of the program. The sequence of planning—action—fact-finding is a learning cycle based on experience. In the first step, the *theory guides* our action. In the second step, we then *implement* the intervention. In the third and last step, *evaluative research* is used to check the effects of the action. However, the intervention does not end there because the results can change the way we think about how we might develop even more effective interventions to solve problems in the future. Community psychologists constantly repeat these three steps to gain more data to improve the effectiveness of their interventions.

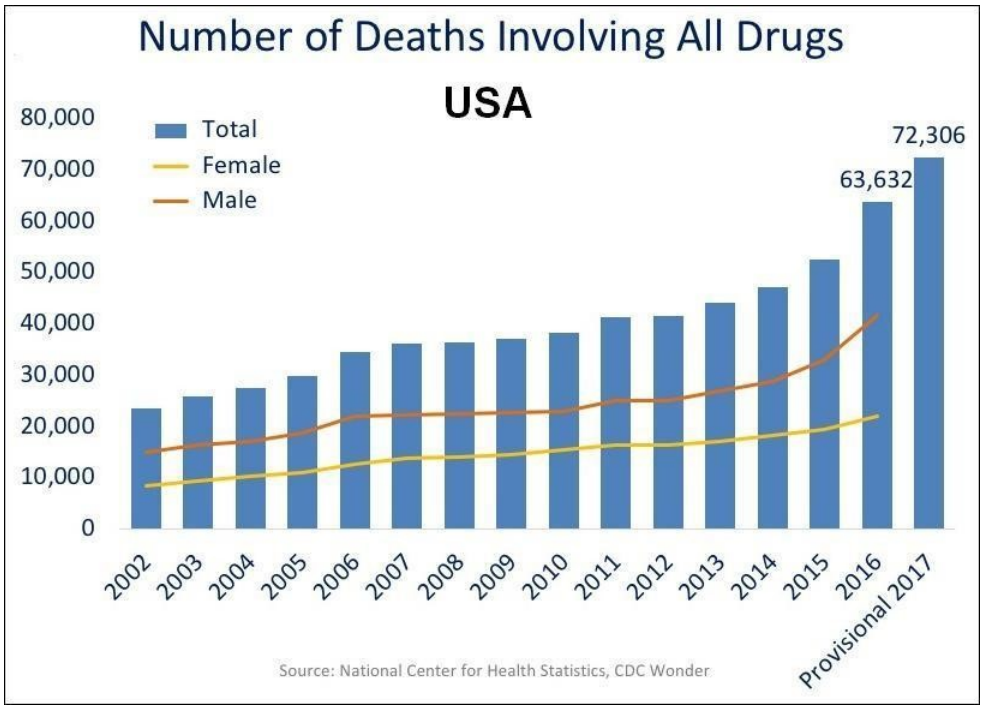


Figure 2. "US timeline. Number of overdose deaths from all drugs" by National Institute on Drug Abuse is a derivative by Timeshifter, who cropped the original chart and added "USA" is licensed under CC0

Let's look at this approach with a specific case. The prevention of drug abuse is important, as thousands of people die each year from addiction. Research has shown that the majority of adults with drug abuse problems start using when they are teenagers, are subject to social peer pressure, and are exposed to negative behavior models in their immediate family and community environment. In addition, a growing number of studies over decades showed that specific programs are effective in overcoming these issues (Griffin & Botvin, 2010), and the results of one program led to even more effective and comprehensive programs. These types of prevention programs have multiple components including providing skills to resist attempts at social influence, improving communication in the family, and reducing adolescents' access to drugs. Prevention programs at school have provided youths training in social skills to resist peer pressure, raise self-esteem, and reduce favorable perceptions about substance use. In addition, interventions with parents aimed to improve family communication and the establishment of rules against using drugs. Finally, community prevention efforts have confronted larger scale ecological factors, such as the media that often promote alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substance use. In this case, it is important for an intervention to use many of these strategies together, with comprehensive actions being developed through **community coalitions**. The following case study is an example of community psychologists working on multiple ecological levels when implementing a prevention program.

Case Study 11.3
A Community Intervention to Decrease Adolescent Tobacco Use



"boy writing on printer paper near girl" by Santi Vedrí is licensed under the UnsplashLicense

Kaufman, Jason, Sawlski, and Halpert (1994) launched a community intervention to decrease the number of new smokers, particularly focusing on African American adolescents. The preventive intervention combined a school-based curriculum with a media campaign. A total of 472 elementary schools provided students with a smoking prevention booklet, while the media campaign reached out to the broader community. A widely distributed local newspaper included parts of the curriculum on their weekly children's page. A local radio station, with over a million listeners, aired a call-in talk show focusing on better parent-child

communication about smoking. The station also aired anti-smoking public service announcements and promoted a smoking prevention rap contest for school children. Winners from five age groups had their raps aired, and the overall winner was a guest DJ. Additionally, owners of approximately two hundred billboards sponsored a contest in which children developed posters conveying anti-smoking messages, and winning posters from each of the five age groups were displayed on billboards. Participants for this preventive trial were randomly assigned to groups that either received the school-based curriculum or did not. However, both groups were exposed to the media messages and over 90% of the students indicated that they listened to the radio program on a regular basis. Smoking significantly decreased over time for students in both groups. But only those students provided with the school curriculum plus media campaign reported reading significantly more of the newspaper content and substantially increased their knowledge about the dangers of smoking, compared to the student group only exposed to the media campaign.

In the case study above, the intervention effects demonstrated the merit of community-wide, comprehensive preventive interventions. As demonstrated, Community Psychology interventions are based on the scientific understanding of the problem (e.g., drug abuse), with an **empirical analysis** of risk and protective factors. Secondly, the interventions keep in mind the changes that need to be achieved in the community, aiming to consider the ecological levels that were discussed in Chapter 1. As indicated earlier, these interventions also bring in the active participation of community members in planning and implementing the programs.

IMPLEMENTATION



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What do we mean by **implementation**? As mentioned above, having a good community intervention depends on how well the program has been designed and tested out to be effective. It is also important to keep in mind how ready or interested the setting or people are in the intervention because if the community does not really want the program, it is very unlikely to be accepted or used by the community members.

Case Study 11.4
A Classroom Exercise and Lessons in Implementation



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One high school teacher performed an interesting exercise with his students in a class. First, he inserted cotton in a transparent bottle. Next, he lit a cigarette and placed it so the smoke entered the bottle. After a while, the students could see that the cotton had blackened and retained a part of the tar and other harmful elements of tobacco. In a simple way, this showed the effect of smoking on the lungs. When adolescents are informed about the negative health consequences of smoking, they may be less likely to use tobacco. However, the achievement of good preventive results with this group of adolescents does not only depend on having clear intervention ideas, such as the demonstration of the cotton in the bottle but also enlists the help of the students and teachers in changing the social pressures to smoke. It also involves the larger community including the media, such as in Case Study 11.3. Furthermore, it is important to have the groups actively invested in the program, and this can occur when they participate in the design and implementation of the intervention. In part, the success of the intervention also depends on when and where this activity will occur during and after school; these type of factors influence how well the program is *implemented*.

In Case Study 11.4, we are focusing on community dynamics—a critical factor that is often forgotten when interventions are developed. By considering the community dynamics when implementing an intervention, this helps shape whether the intervention should be more traditional, with an expert delivering a packaged prevention program, or more in line with the spirit of Community Psychology, where community partnerships actively bring those voices into the design of the intervention.

Theory is an important aspect when community psychologists develop and implement ecological community interventions, but there is more that is needed to make long-lasting changes. Other critical areas involve the skill levels and knowledge of those who implement the programs, the interest and readiness for the intervention among the community members, and the availability of the needed resources required by the intervention. We can illustrate these points with the example of smoking, which was reviewed in Chapter 1. If you can believe it, there was a time when commercials had physicians endorsing tobacco use (see the video on physicians endorsing tobacco in Chapter 6; Stevens & Dropkin, 2019)! In the 1940s and 1950s, few people thought that tobacco use was harmful. It was not until tobacco use and its effects were studied for years that public perception, and then policy, were changed. Over the past 50 years, there have been significant reductions in smoking in the US (Biglan & Taylor, 2000). This reduction was due to evidence gathered over time on the consequences of tobacco abuse, which helped change people's opinions about smoking.

Communities may vary in the degree of awareness to a specific social problem, as few were willing to address tobacco use as a problem before the 1960s. With the Surgeon General's report, the public began to view tobacco as a harmful social problem. This shows that, in practice, some communities may be more or less prepared for changes. That is why the degree of "**community readiness**" often determines whether our community interventions will be effective. From this perspective, implementation is a key process: since it is not enough to design effective programs, it is also necessary to attend to the factors that make the desired social change possible.

Case Study 11.5
The Importance of Public Awareness in Prevention Efforts



"Stop gender based violence sign in Liberia" by blk24ga is licensed under CC BY 3.0

Investigators have tried to prevent intimate partner violence in different Latin American countries. In one of the countries, there was frequent debate on television about gender-based violence, and this led to several organizations advocating for greater protection of women. In another country, there was little publicity or awareness of these types of issues, and there was not the same type of organizational advocacy. In other words, the issue was not publicly discussed nor were there organizations promoting community awareness of this topic.

In the above case study, the level of community readiness was high in the first country but low in the second, which led to more intimate violence prevention programs being launched in one country than the other.



Photo by Isidro Maya-Jariego and Daniel Holgado

Let's go back to the above cases 11.3 and 11.4 showing tobacco prevention to again illustrate the importance of community readiness and successful implementation. The "Communities That Care" program well represents this concern for awareness of community contexts and the implementation process (Oesterle et al., 2015). This is a Community Psychology program that aims to reduce drug dependency, criminal behavior, violence, and other harmful behaviors among adolescents. The program is often initiated through a local community coalition, in which different organizations collaborate to develop united action for preventive purposes. This means that adolescents receive a consistent message from different agents of the community and are exposed to social norms that promote healthy habits. In addition, these community agents participate in choosing the evidence-based practices that will be implemented. Accordingly, they are jointly responsible for both the actions that are carried out and the introduction of adjustments to adapt them to the specific characteristics of the community. Finally, it is important that preventive actions have the intensity, continuity, and **dose** necessary to have the most significant impact in the community context. Dose refers to the number of sessions or the duration of a program and influences the level of results we can achieve. For example, we cannot expect one social skills training session to have the same result as a longer semester-long program. Just like a muscle, the more these programs are exercised, the stronger they are. Thus, beyond the quality of the programs, how the community supports the idea and helps to carry it out affects how the program is applied on multiple levels in the community. The application of the Communities That Care program in neighborhoods has been found to reduce the overall consumption of alcohol, cigarette, and smokeless tobacco, as well as delinquent behavior. This video link provides more information about the Communities That Care model and its effectiveness.

In Figure 3, we have summarized some of the key factors in the implementation process when trying to prevent alcohol abuse.

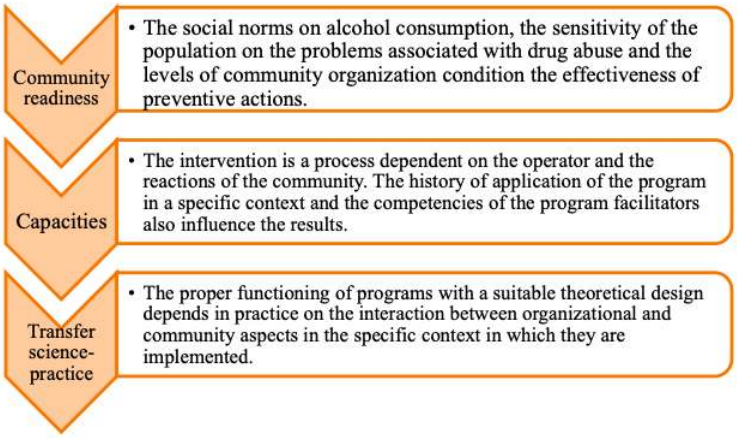


Figure 3. "The logic of implementation in the prevention of abusive alcohol consumption" by Isidro Maya-Jariego and Daniel Holgado

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY CONTEXTS

When we seek to address problems through community interventions, we discover the importance of the environment and potential community partners (Shinn & Toohey, 2003). In other words, we need to understand the context, or the neighborhoods and community settings, within which we place the community interventions. We can illustrate this with the following examples involving refugees and the approaches of several countries in dealing with this issue.

In Colombia, displaced persons can access housing when they flee political violence. However, this often places them in a segregated space where they share their day-to-day lives with other people who also suffer from *post-traumatic stress*. This also occurs in Spain with incoming refugees, who are received in publicly owned "reception centers" that cover their basic housing, food, and health needs. They can also access language courses, workshops to improve employability, and other programs that aim to ease their integration into a new country. However, only a small percentage of the residents in the reception centers are actually able to find work in Spain. Consequently, refugees have not been able to take advantage of the provided psychosocial resources. The case study below illustrates what needs to be taken into consideration when designing effective community interventions.

Case Study 11.6
The Importance of an Ecological Lens: A Family Seeking Asylum



"Helping Syrian children to learn in Lebanon" by DFID – UK Department of International Development is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The Patatanian family arrived in Madrid from Armenia, fleeing the harassment they suffered for religious reasons. They were received in the center of asylum seekers and provided accommodation and food. The parents received Spanish classes and made some contacts to learn about the labor market in Madrid while waiting for their case to resolve. Their children joined a school and, despite some difficulties adapting to a new country, made friends and did well enough academically. However, after nine months in Spain, they received a notification that the government did not recognize their refugee status. Consequently, although the Spanish teaching and employment guidance programs were well designed, the legal situation prevented the integration of the Patatanian family in Spain by not providing them the ability to apply for jobs. This resulted in the programs not achieving the objectives they were designed to meet.

The family, however, was fortunate to have another chance for a better life. Shortly after their experience in Spain, they decided to try again in Canada, where they were welcomed with not only the classes and resources but also the opportunities to fully participate in the workforce. The family members learned French and integrated very well with the community of Armenians living in Montreal. They also became friends with some neighbors and, little by little, could normalize their lives and find employment.

The case study of the family above shows why community interventions often need to transcend the individual level and deal with higher ecological levels. That is, it is about introducing deeper, **second-order changes** such as providing employment opportunities, that can have a more lasting and sustainable effect on individual behavior.

Let's take child labor as another example. Child labor is a worldwide problem, affecting a large number of developing countries. It has a very negative impact on the cognitive, affective, and social development of the child. Programs can be developed that promote self-esteem, train social skills, or reinforce academic motivation. But, an effective intervention program also needs to focus on the children's environment. If parents need to have their children work at very young ages to support the family as a whole, community psychologists need to take this into consideration and possibly find better ways for the parents to earn money so that they do not need to depend on their children to earn money, as illustrated in the case study below.



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Case Study 11.7
Edúcame Primero



Photo by Isidro Maya-Jariego and Daniel Holgado

The Edúcame Primero is an initiative that aims to reduce child labor through psychoeducational strategies and community collaboration. Some of the strategies are oriented toward creating safe learning spaces in the school and the involvement of the family in the education of the children, as well as the collaboration with other agents in the community context. A central element of the program is the use of a methodology called *Spaces for Growth* (SfG): that is, complementary training workshops for formal education that include strategies for facilitating participation and active collaboration for children and young people, as well as their families and the staffs of educational centers. The SfG promote collaboration with different agents in educational and community contexts, namely: teachers, professionals, community leaders, and families. They participate in the design of the workshops, the configuration of the program content, and the adaptation of the program to the characteristics of the educational center. To this end, the involvement of parents, exchange forums with community agents, and regular meetings with staff of the educational centers are organized. Community readiness is evaluated by gathering information on (a) existing resources and key players in the community context, (b) previous experience in the implementation of intervention programs in child labor, (c) the level of awareness about child labor as a problem among community members and (d) the degree of community cohesion around existing needs linked to child labor. Finally, facilitators play a key role in the adjustment to the community context. They are professionals selected on the basis of their capacity for teaching children and young people, their knowledge of the community environments in which the SfG will be implemented, as well as their leadership skills (e. g., abilities for community mobilization).

The Edúcame Primero program has proven to be a good practice in the prevention of child labor, with positive results in terms of prevention and reduction of child labor. A video of the Edúcame Primero is available here.

In Latin America, these types of intervention efforts have been developed by international organizations, such as the International Labor Organization (through the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor), in collaboration with national governments and other third-party entities. In the last two decades, these international organizations have designed and implemented programs that have resulted in the worldwide prevalence of child labor decreasing by about 30 percent. As we can see in the Edúcame Primero example, environmental contexts need to be considered when developing these types of Community Psychology interventions. Figure 4 illustrates the multiple ecological levels of community-based interventions.

Ecological level	Context of intervention	Examples of action
Individual	Children at risk	• Promotion of self-esteem • Social skills training
Micro-social	Families	• Change of attitudes • Improvement of the supervision of children
Organizational	Schools	• Improvement of the organizational social climate • School relations with families
Locations	Rural vs. urban	• Agricultural activities vs. selling in the streets • Internally displaced persons vs. parent studies
Macro-social	Policies	• Agreements between employers and unions • Compulsory education policies

Figure 4. “Context matters: Prevention of child labor at multiple ecological levels” by Isidro Maya-Jariego and Daniel Holgado

SUMMING UP



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There are many important lessons we can learn from working to develop community interventions. Some of these lessons include the need for using programs that have some evidence that supports them and working collaboratively with the community to be sure that they support and help design the actual program. Community psychologists use good theory and methods with the community members, and this is something that often does not occur with many interventions that are thrust on communities with

little input from community members. Active community participation makes it more likely that the intervention is accepted and carried on into the future by the community members.

In summary, community intervention is a planned action aimed at changing behavior in relation to a social problem. Action research consists of a learning cycle based on experience, through which interventions are based on previous theoretical models and in turn, generate new knowledge through the application of programs. Effectiveness is gauged by aiming at obtaining results with the application of evidence-based practices. Implementation should take into consideration the level of community readiness and focus on promoting active community participation.



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? Critical Thought Questions

1. You probably know of a community program because you have been a participant, volunteer, or simply an observer of it. Can you explain the difference between planning and implementation of programs, using this example?
2. Explain the following sentence: “to make good planning it is important to know the previous research on the subject, to make a good implementation it is important to have a good knowledge of the community receiving the intervention.”
3. Think of a social problem that is relevant to you and reflect on the degree of “community readiness” that exists in your city to deal with this problem. Justify your arguments with some empirical data referring to the place where you reside.
4. Using the “Edúcame Primero” program as an example, try to explain the following concepts: “effectiveness”, “dose”, and “community coalition”.

Take the Chapter 11 Quiz

View the Chapter 11 Lecture Slides

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SECTION OVERVIEW

10.4.9: Tools for Action

10.4.9.1: Public Policy

10.4.9.2: Community Organizing, Partnerships, and Coalitions

10.4.9.3: Behavioral Community Approaches

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10.4.9.1: Public Policy

Chapter Fourteen Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand how public policy interventions can bring about impactful change
- See how social justice issues can be addressed through public policy
- Identify ways you can get involved in public policy

Maria had to take out thousands of dollars in student loans to afford college tuition, and then she had to spend a large percentage of her post-graduation income paying off those loans. This is not an unfamiliar story, and more and more college students face this situation. In fact, millions who attended college seeking an education and a better life now face crippling student loan debt. For example, in the US, student loan debt totals $1.5 trillion dollars, increasing by nearly 400% in the last 30 years and more than tripling since 2005. This loan crisis is now causing financial strain to many who are trying to repay their student loans, disproportionately impacting low-income students of color (Miller, 2017).

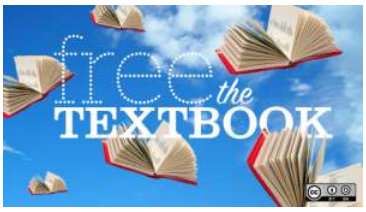


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This chapter is about policies that often are not visible but create these types of hardships, and it will often take a historical perspective to see the reasons so many have diminished life opportunities and long-term financial hardship. Let's examine some of the public policies that have caused this problem. Tuition costs for both public and private institutions have risen, state investments in higher education have been reduced, and many student loans are now privatized. The solution to the student loan problem will require policy changes such as increasing grant aid awarded to low and middle-income students, and passing legislation that would make tuition more affordable. Even more daring and bold policies are being tried such as waiving tuition costs entirely. In 2018 New York University's School of Medicine began waiving tuition fees for all students in an effort to ease both student debt and the ongoing physician shortage. Kasiser Permanente's new medical school will also be free to attend. Other academic institutions are trying to reduce or eliminate tuition by asking students to pay the schools a small amount of their earnings following graduation. These are examples of real policy interventions that can help revolutionize the problem of excessive student debt.

But there are other ways that we can make a difference as community psychologists. For example, offering free online college textbooks is another way of lowering economic burdens that students encounter at school, indicated in Case Study 14.1.

Case Study 14.1
Free Online Textbook



"Flat World Knowledge: Open College Textbooks" by opensource.com is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

When the DePaul University Library surveyed students about the impact of textbook affordability on their education, almost 1,000 students completed the survey within the first week. Many students indicated that the cost of textbooks was negatively affecting their lives. Students reported choosing not to purchase textbooks or purchasing them later in the quarter. Of those who did not purchase a textbook, 41.6% cited cost. 56% of the respondents were in their first two years at DePaul and reported receiving a poor grade because they could not afford the textbook for their course. The authors of this book decided to try to make a small difference by developing this free online textbook (Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019), which we hope will help to reduce this economic burden on our undergraduates taking an introductory course in Community Psychology. We consider this very consistent with the values of our field. The authors also worked for almost two years developing a Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA) "Student Associate" free membership status for undergraduates, and this is very much within the tradition of second-order policy change by lowering barriers to active participation in SCRA.



Photo courtesy of Jack O'Brien

When our new free textbook was introduced in a Community Psychology course at DePaul University, the immediate reaction was very positive (the students uttered a collective sigh of relief) as they mentioned how grateful they were for not having to purchase it. A typical reaction was "This is wonderful, a free textbook!" Our work with this textbook is part of a larger movement to provide textbooks free, online, and available to everyone, and this movement is growing every day. These types of very real structural changes really can make a difference. In this chapter, we will provide an overview of what **public policy** is and how community psychologists engage in this work to address the underlying roots of the problems we face. This chapter will also provide ways you can become involved with public policy.

WHAT IS PUBLIC POLICY?



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Almost every aspect of our lives is impacted by public policy**.** Public policy is broadly defined as the laws, regulations, course of action, and funding priorities issued by the government to address a social issue at the local, state, and national level. Essentially, social change often requires the development of a new policy or the revision of an existing policy. Public policies can address

societal issues in different areas, including education, healthcare, housing, mental health, immigration, and crime. Policies in these areas can have a far-reaching and long-lasting impact on individuals and communities. Policies also vary in scope. For instance, the legalization of same-sex marriage, how much funding is allocated towards public libraries and colleges, and even what is served for lunch at public schools are all examples of public policy.



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The impact of policies can also transcend nations by having a global effect. Countries with environmental policies that fail to regulate the use of resources and reduce pollution are making the world less habitable for everyone. The burning of fossil fuels – such as oil, natural gas, and coal—increases greenhouse gas emissions which causes the earth's climate to rise to warmer than normal temperatures. The solution to this problem will require new policies that will cause countries to switch from using fossil fuels to using greener and more renewable sources of energy (such as solar or wind power). Some may wonder if we can ever be successful with such a daunting goal. Well, others have realized their dreams, such as Mahatma Ghandi who repeatedly confronted the British-controlled government with acts of civil disobedience to bring about freedom for India. The struggle to gain India's freedom took a long time, and this long-term perspective is often needed to deal with the many policy actions that are causing current problems such as climate change.

Policies created to address specific social issues can either be effective or ineffective. One example of an effective policy is The Housing Choice Voucher Program created to address the lack of affordable housing for low-income households and homelessness by providing rent subsidies. This program has proven to be highly effective in reducing and preventing homelessness and helping low-income families remain housed (Wood, Turnham, & Mills, 2008). On the other hand, mass incarceration as a means to deter drug use is an example of an ineffective policy. As indicated in Chapter 1 (Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019), the war on drugs (which has led to increased use of harsher drug laws) and three-strike laws (which result in life sentences for drug offenses) have proven to be ineffective in preventing drug use. Rather, these policies perpetuate the incarceration cycle among those with substance use disorders.

Through research and **advocacy**, community psychologists have directly influenced public policy to produce **second-order change**. The work on subsidized housing programs is one way to end homelessness. Another Community Psychology example involves work with Oxford House, described in Chapter 1, where over 20,000 people today live in these democratic, self-governing homes. Yet there are communities that oppose sharing their neighborhoods with group homes for people with disabilities or substance use disorders. For example, some cities have tried to pass laws that make it illegal for more than five unrelated people to live in an Oxford house—and this deliberately targets recovery homes which usually need six to ten house members to make rent affordable. Case Study 14.2 is an example of working at the judicial level in order to preserve access to affordable housing for those with substance use disorders.

Case Study 14.2
Not in My Backyard



Photo by Leonard A. Jason, Bradley D. Olson, Joseph R. Ferrari, and Anthony T. Lo Sasso. Previously published in "Communal Housing Settings Enhance Substance Abuse Recovery" (2006). Used with permission from the author.

Leonard Jason was called by a lawyer who asked for help with a dispute involving a town trying to close the local Oxford House recovery home by passing legislation whereby no more than five unrelated individuals could live in one home. But small homes of this size are very difficult to sustain as there are too few people to pay for the house expenses. This is an example of Not in My Backyard thinking, where some community members try to exclude those in recovery homes from their neighborhoods. Jason quickly looked into a national Oxford House data set and examined how the number of residents in Oxford House affected residents' individual outlooks for recovery. He and his research team found that larger house sizes, of eight or more residents, actually had less criminal and aggressive behavior than houses with fewer residents. The findings were influential: they were used in this court case and others to successfully argue against closing larger house size Oxford Houses (Jason et al., 2008). The founder of these Oxford Houses, Paul Molloy, sent this note to Jason regarding one judicial case that was resolved with the help of these data: "The dispute has been ongoing for six years! The town will pay attorney's fees, which are about $105,000 and a fine to the Department of Justice. The key to their decision appears to be your research showing that larger houses had better outcomes than the smaller ones. Thanks. Once again reason and logic prevailed."

When involving yourself with public policy, it is possible to make a difference, as Case Study 14.2 shows. The following sections provide an overview of the many ways in which community psychologists can influence public policy.

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY

Efforts at the public policy level have always been at the forefront of the efforts of community psychologists to address social issues. Work at this level is considered a core competency for Community Psychology practice and is described as the ability to develop effective working relationships with policymakers, elected officials, and community leaders (Dalton & Wolfe, 2012). To meet this competency, community psychologists are trained in a variety of skills including how to write brief statements used to influence politicians, how to translate research findings into policy recommendations, how to build advocacy coalitions with various community organizations, and how to develop good communication and relationship-building skills.



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Public policy interventions often focus on a second-order/systems change approach to address the systemic issues such as the inequitable distribution of resources. Importantly, Community psychologists value involving individuals affected by an issue in the policy formulation and implementation process.

Often work at the public policy level involves **prevention**. Community psychologists have worked in public policy at the local, state, and national levels, in the areas of substance abuse prevention, school violence prevention, and HIV/AIDS prevention. As an example, Case Study 14.3 describes policy work that has focused on social-emotional learning to enhance positive youth outcomes.

Case Study 14.3
Social-Emotional Learning in Schools



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Students within K-12 educational settings can be supported through policies and programs that promote positive youth development and prevent negative outcomes. One example of an effective prevention program developed and implemented involves social-emotional learning, which equips students with tools to set and achieve goals, handle their emotions, interpersonal relationships, and life events, and to engage in responsible decision-making. A leader in this field is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, which have been working to extend programs involving social and emotional learning to school children for more than two decades. This organization, founded by community psychologist Roger Weissberg, collaborates with leading experts and supports districts, schools, and states nationwide to drive research, guide practice, and inform policy. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning supports federal efforts to increase funding for research and evidence-based practice related to social and emotional learning. Through their Collaborating States Initiative, they work with 25 states to support social and emotional learning, and all 50 states have incorporated this approach into their preschool standards; a growing number are doing the same for grades K-12. Learn more by viewing their State Scan Scorecard project, Emerging Insights Report, and extensive CSI resources.

Understanding the Policymaking Process

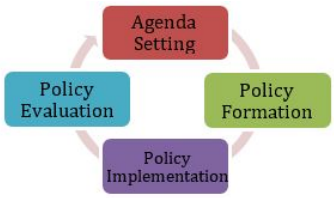


Figure 1. Stages of the Policymaking Process by Mayra Guerrero

There are four stages of working on public policy. They involve (1) **agenda setting**, (2) **policy formation and adoption**, (3) **policy implementation**, and (4) **policy evaluation and revision**. The figure above illustrates the cyclical nature of these stages in the **policymaking process**. Moreover, each phase requires attention to relationships and communication amongst diverse stakeholder groups. Groups involved in public policy include the government advocacy organizations, citizens, and media (as will be indicated below), but first, let's define these four phases.



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(1) Agenda setting. During the first phase of the policymaking process, it is important for those who set policy to take a particular issue seriously. If, for example, the public officials do not think that climate change is of importance, they will devote little of their time and energy to this issue. So, the agenda-setting phase involves determining whether people with power and influence care about a particular issue. As there are many social problems that may exist in a community or society, only a select number of them

might get on the agenda and receive attention for possible action. It is important for community psychologists to work toward bringing attention to an issue so that others will care about it in order to devote time and resources toward improving the situation.

Kingdon (1995) described the process by which a pressing social issue makes it on the policy agenda as three influential "streams." First, the **problem stream** involves the range of social issues that may affect a given population, ranging from high levels of unemployment and low levels of available housing, to rates of drug addiction and homelessness within neighborhoods. For example, if a problem affects many people, it is more likely to secure some attention. Second, the **policy stream** embodies potential solutions that can address each of these social issues, and of course the costs of these solutions. If there are some practical and affordable solutions to the problems, it raises the likelihood of people willing to consider these issues. Lastly, the **political stream** involves the level of public concern to actually devote time and resources to one of these topics and possible solutions. If the public is more concerned, the topic is more likely to receive attention.



"2016-10-19 walkout" by Voice of America (VOA) is Public Domain in the United States of America

(2) Policy formation and adoption. In the second phase, a solution to address the social issue is adopted. As an example, if inadequate funding for public schools is agreed upon as an issue needing attention, the politicians could pass laws that channel more funds to schools. The primary places where these types of actions might occur are in legislative bodies, in which elected officials vote on laws.

But policies can also be adopted at the executive level by someone in a high position, such as a president or mayor of a city. A president can create policy through executive orders, such as the "Travel Ban"(E.O 13769), which tried to limit the ability of individuals wanting to travel to the US. In addition to a president, agencies within the executive branch can adopt policies. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is an executive agency that has been able to move resources into Housing First, which was described in Chapter 1 as an important solution to the homelessness problem in the US.



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(3) Policy implementation. Once a policy is adopted, there are many different ways it can be implemented. A well-thought-out policy can be adopted but if limited or inadequate funds are provided for it to be carried out, it is unlikely to have any effects. For example, a prevention program introduced into a school classroom might be compromised and much less effective if the school district has policies which result in inadequate funds being provided for books and other resources needed to implement the prevention program.



"No Child Left Behind Act" by the United States Executive Office is Public Domain

(4) Policy evaluation and revision. The last phase of the policy process is the policy evaluation and revision phase. During this phase, an effort is made to determine if the policy had its intended outcomes, and whether it can be improved to more effectively address the social issue. The policy might need to be replaced with an improved policy or terminated in its entirety. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act aimed to address educational inequity by increasing the government's role in holding schools accountable for the academic progress of their students. This law put an emphasis on standardized testing by implementing frequent assessments measuring students' educational improvement and rewarding the schools with the highest assessment scores. No Child Left Behind was found to have unintended consequences such as placing too much emphasis on testing, and it even resulted in some school closures. There are now efforts to revise and even replace this set of policies.

Overall, this policymaking process is cyclical and recursive in nature. As demonstrated by the descriptions of the four phases, there are several points in the policy process through which community psychologists can engage in policy efforts. The ways in which community psychologists engage in this cyclical process are discussed in the next section.

HOW COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY



"Change By Us citizen engagement platform now open source" by opensource.com is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Roles and Settings

Community psychologists can influence public policy at any step of the policymaking process by working alongside or within advocacy groups. Advocacy groups, community psychologists, community members, and policymakers are all involved in these policy decisions. Some of the key players on the policy front can be large intermediary organizations such as professional membership organizations, foundations, and research and evaluation firms. For instance, community psychologists can work with Mathematica or the Urban Institute, which are research and evaluation firms that are hired by **federal agencies** to conduct policy evaluations. Foundations like the William T. Grant Foundation also provide opportunities to engage in policy work, given their focus on funding policy initiatives that address social issues which are important to community psychologists. In fact, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, which was described in case study 14.3 was begun by a grant from the William T. Grant Foundation. Community psychologists also work with other types of advocacy organizations including member-led social action groups (e.g., Black Lives Matter) or even small informal groups (e.g., a group of students and teachers advocating for funding for afterschool programs).

SCRA is one example of an intermediary organization that is the central professional home of many community psychologists. This organization is open to researchers, practitioners, and students (and as stated in Case Study 14.1, you can be an Associate Student member at no cost). Advocating for federal and legislative policies that promote social justice is an important goal of SCRA. This organization issues policy statements to take public positions on social issues offers research and scientific evidence that support their positions and provides recommendations to policymakers and other **stakeholders**. The first public policy statements SCRA released was on the role of recovery homes in promoting long-term addiction recovery and can be viewed here. SCRA also releases rapid responses, which are public stances and action plans on policy issues that are time-sensitive and require immediate action. In addition, SCRA has a Public Policy Committee, which provides members with resources and training to facilitate their policy involvement.



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Many community psychologists are engaged in **policy advocacy** work as researchers within universities. As faculty members, community psychologists are able to contribute to policy in many different ways. For example, Community Psychology faculty can develop expertise in a given policy area, generate research findings with specific policy implications and recommendations, advocate for policies that are empirically supported, and work as policy consultants for advocacy organizations like the ones described above. Most of all, university faculty educate students on policy-relevant issues and provide ways they can become involved in policy advocacy.

In addition, community psychologists can work as policy insiders within local, state, and federal levels of the government. Policy roles within the government can be obtained through direct election, appointment by an elected official, or by obtaining employment as a **civil servant**. Some examples of these roles include working as a congressional staffer or working as a member of a local school board. Working as policy insiders within the government allows community psychologists to oversee policy implementation and possibly the creation of new legislation.

Methods for Influencing Public Policy

There are several methods through which community psychologists can work in public policy. The following methods may be used throughout the four stages of the policymaking process:



"Vivian Malone registering" by Warren K. Leffler, U.S. News & World Report Magazine and restored by Adam Cuerden is Public Domain

Research. As mentioned earlier, research is a key tool community psychologists use to influence policy and there are different types used to influence policy (National Academy of Science, 2012). One of these ways is **conceptual research**, which is used to educate policymakers and stakeholders on social issues and propose possible solutions. Community psychologists often use this type of research to help policymakers view a social issue as a systemic problem caused by ineffective and harmful policies rather than individual deficits. Such research has been used to show how segregation leads to increased stigma for those being excluded from the mainstream. A prime example of how conceptual research influenced policy is the historic US Supreme Court's decision in Brown vs Board of Education, which led to the desegregation of schools. Conceptual research by psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark (1947) demonstrated the harmful psychological effects of segregation, which was cited by the Supreme Court as having played a crucial role in their decision that racial segregation of schools was inherently unethical and unconstitutional.

Instrumental research can be used to persuade policymakers to adopt a policy. Over the past few decades, the disability community has used policy interventions to bring about major changes to the ways that individuals with disabilities can have greater access to opportunities. These include altering pavements and curbs at intersections so they allow people in wheelchairs to safely navigate through them, and providing individuals with movement disabilities access to buildings, public transportation, and parking spots (Jason & Jung, 1984).

Consultation. Community psychologists often act as consultants in public policy by sharing their research and advocacy expertise with organizations or governmental agencies. This often begins when community psychologists develop personal relationships with policymakers and government officials. Consultation is a way of influencing policy (Block, 2006) by providing policymakers with relevant evidence and data. Community psychologists, during the consultative process, have been instrumental in providing content-level expertise on current efforts to reduce human trafficking and to condemn hate and terrorism by white supremacists.



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Program evaluation. Evaluation is important across the policymaking process, but particularly within the policy implementation and evaluation stages. In evaluation, community psychologists might aim to examine whether a social program works well, who it works well for, under what conditions it works well, and whether it can work better (Miller, 2017). For example, the Meals on Wheels program delivers meals to older adults in need to help with their nutrition as well as reduce their isolation. Evaluations of this program have found a number of positive outcomes for meal recipients, and the findings from the evaluations have been used to make the programs even more effective.

Coalition-building. Community psychologists also use their communication and relationship-building skills to form **coalitions** with community members, organizations, and policymakers. Members of a coalition share a common policy interest and agree to work together to influence or develop a public policy. Forming and maintaining coalitions is an effective way to influence policy. Nelson Mandela, imprisoned for decades in South Africa, inspired coalitions to continue their activist work, and these coalitions were eventually successful in abolishing the system of apartheid.

Media and written communication. Community psychologists use a variety of communication methods to influence public policy. For example, they can share knowledge as guests on multimedia outlets like news radio, television, or podcasts. More commonly, community psychologists can influence policymaking decisions through written communication in "white papers." These concisely provide scientific evidence and recommendations directly to those in decision-making positions. Communication strategies vary depending upon the audience. For example, appearances on podcasts and public radio may be informal, to target voters in order to garner support for a public policy issue. Providing "white papers" to congressional officials, on the other hand, requires concise written language with straightforward suggestions that are sensitive to the policymakers' busy schedules. When coal miners have been killed by negligent mining practices, white papers and publicity surrounding their deaths led to better laws and regulations. These types of tragedies have been used to highlight and bring attention to abuses of power, which have been used by policy activists to change the status quo and bring about social justice. Another example is Rachel Carson's influential book *Silent Spring*, which powerfully identified abuses in the use of pesticides and helped start the global environmental movement.

Selecting a Policy Issue and Developing a Plan for Action

There are many ways in which students and community psychologists can get involved with public policy. Below are some practical suggestions:

Choosing an issue to advocate for. There are many social issues that require advocacy and many social issues with which we may be interested in getting involved. Before getting involved in public policy work on a particular issue, it is important to examine which issues are most aligned with your interests, skills, and access to resources like time, funds, materials, or energy. One way that you can examine your competencies related to an issue is through the Advocacy Self-Assessment (Jason, Beasley, & Hunter, 2015).

Practical Application 14.1: Advocacy Self-Assessment Tool

To complete the self-assessment in this activity box, first consider several social issues with which you are interested in engaging in advocacy work. Once you have selected the social issues, complete the self-assessment questions for each social issue. Then, total up your scores for each issue to determine which received the high score. This will help you determine what you are most passionate about.

Using the range below, rate your agreement to each question for each of your chosen issues. Once you have determined which social issues might best fit your advocacy competencies and commitment, consider making a plan for your involvement. For the issue you score highest on, develop a plan to advocate directly and indirectly to initiate social change through policy.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree/Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

COMMITMENT

1. Are you strongly committed to working on this issue?
2. Are you willing to put in a great effort to achieve this goal?
3. Would you be willing to spend many years working on this issue?
4. Do you have a sense of obligation to continue working on this issue above all others?

CENTRALITY

1. Is what you have listed more important than any other issue you could work on?
2. Is this a matter of great personal meaning to you?
3. Do you have a passion and a burning desire to see this issue dealt with?
4. Is this an issue that you devote a lot of time thinking about?

RESOURCES

1. Are you a member of or work with any activist groups or community organizations that are dealing with the topic you have selected?
2. Are you aware of any friends, family members or colleagues who are either working on this issue or interested in doing so?
3. Do you have access to resources (time, energy, funds, materials) that might be applied to working with this topic?
4. Do you feel that you have the capabilities and confidence to engage in work with the issue that you have mentioned?

Stay informed. Listen to the news and stay informed of current events occurring both locally and at a national level. This could even include following current bills and resolutions being presented before your city council or congress, procedures to be implemented by executive offices (e.g., Department of Education), or cases to be heard before the Supreme Court. A useful tool is the GovTrack website, which shows where bills and resolutions are within their legislative process.



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Contact policymakers. There are several ways in which you can communicate with policymakers at all levels of government. Federal elected officials have offices in your cities and towns, as well as in Washington DC, to whom you can write letters or make phone calls. Similarly, state elected officials can be reached by phone and by mail at their neighborhood or state offices. Another way to interact with policymakers is through social media (e.g., Twitter) or through email in which you can express your concerns and opinions about ongoing legislation. You can find out who your elected officials are by visiting this website. A helpful resource for contacting elected officials is Resist Bot (which automates faxes and messages from your cell phone).

Policy and advocacy organizations. There are many opportunities for getting involved with existing policy organizations. If you have an interest in a particular social issue, such as rising economic inequalities, you can find local and national organizations that are focused on that work. A good way to get informed is to ask to be listed on an organization's email list and follow them on social media. Getting connected to organizations may allow for engagement through events, town halls, or event Capitol Hill days in which organizations arrange visits to legislative offices to speak with policymakers. Furthermore, students may also explore working with the organization through volunteer or internship positions.

CHALLENGES TO POLICY WORK

Engaging in policy work is not easy. There are many challenges that community psychologists often will need to overcome when attempting to influence policy. A major challenge in policy advocacy is that it can take many years before a policy is adopted, implemented, and revised. The key lesson learned by community psychologists is to stay committed to a social issue for the long run. Another major challenge community psychologists face is navigating issues of power when working with policymakers and advocacy organizations. For example, powerful stakeholders with different vested interests may actively try to stand in your way. Policy work requires effectively navigating these challenges.

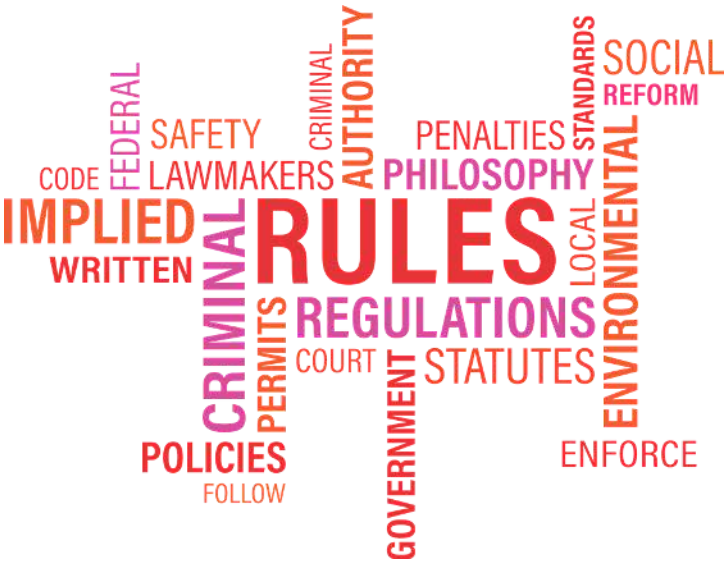


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The topic of school shootings illustrates all these complexities. For example, does the community find this topic to be a pressing issue? Concern for school shootings may arise from public feedback or an event related to the issue. For example, school shootings may be perceived as a more pressing social issue directly after a shooting occurs in a community. Many solutions may be proposed and compared with one another. These solutions offered for school shootings have included the restriction of access to weapons, increasing school security personnel or procedures, and some have even advocated increasing access to guns by teachers. Further, the costs, feasibility, and availability of evidence for each of these solutions need to be evaluated as potential policy solutions. Finally, issues of **partisanship** can emerge. For example, membership to the Republican or Democratic party may influence how receptive a policymaker is to consider a plan to address school shootings. Moreover, broader cultural and societal moods about guns and school violence can influence how a policymaker considers addressing school shootings through policy.



"March For Our Lives, Washington DC" by Lorie Shaull is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Several principles of social change have been used as a guide to initiate and sustain change, as well as to navigate some of the challenges that arise in policy work (Jason, 2013). For example, it is important to see the big picture and be careful to identify who the power holders are. Often they like to see things stay the same, particularly if they are gaining resources and privileges in these roles. When identifying power holders, it is useful to understand their motives for continuing to maintain control, and the influence and power that they wield. Certainly, the National Rifle Association has a powerful role in shaping the dialogue on the availability of guns, and their position has contributed to the wide availability of guns throughout the US. To bring about structural and long-term second-order change, rather than just short-term fixes to a problem, it is often useful to work with coalitions and other allies in order to form strategies to confront those who are abusing the power. Often youth who have been traumatized by a school shooting, as well as parents of children who have been killed, have become powerful agents of change, trying to reduce the availability of

guns. Being willing to stay committed to an issue over time is critical, as it provides opportunities to get to know the central gatekeepers who might need to be dealt with to bring about second-order change. Ultimately, the situation in the US with school shootings will require patience and persistence, and savoring small wins is crucial to sustaining the motivation to work toward long-term goals.

Throughout this policy process, intuition is an essential quality that is relevant, as it often involves a feeling or sense of next steps that need to be taken in strategic coalition-building or political action. Having an intuition that one's vision will be fulfilled in the long run can be a sustaining and life-affirming force in the face of oppressive conditions. Social policy change leaders will often rely on conjuring up a dream and sustaining it with intuition in order to overcome the obstacles that are faced in community work.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

While full participation and involvement are dominant themes within this textbook, the remnants of elitism and non-democratic processes have been present through recorded history, and continue to be widely present today. Anyone can do the following experiment: Think about the setting you spend time in such as your college or school. The Democracy Quiz question is "Who has the power to make decisions?" This deceptively simple question can inform us about whether there is any power-sharing when decisions are made or whether an elite, non-elected group are firmly and totally in charge of decisions. Change at this level will ultimately involve policies that have been reviewed within this chapter and this book.



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Today, millions of Americans are locked up or controlled in total institutions whether they are substance abuse treatment settings, nursing homes, mental institutions, prisons or even schools. If one were to administer our Democracy Quiz in such settings, the answers would be telling. In many cases, the participatory spirit of decision-making would be hardly noticeable. For those with fewest resources, for those with greatest needs, for those with the least opportunities, there is often minimal input on decision-making. In other words, few democratic-type settings are available for those who are discharged from substance abuse treatment facilities, prisons, or mental institutions. These individuals need settings where they can participate as full members, with responsibility and dignity. It is at the policy level that we need to institute many change efforts for those most in need. The broadening self-help moment described throughout this textbook show us the possibilities when individuals with assorted afflictions are provided decision-making responsibilities and power.

To address many of the difficult policy level problems that we face, it is often important to take a few steps back and consider a historical perspective that accounts for changes that have put our world at risk for its current problems, and provides a way to explore and eventually address these problems on a deeper policy level (Jason, 1997). There was a time when people helped one another, not out of charity, but because it was the natural way of life. But over time there has been a weakening of long-term bonds with the land, family, and community and a reduction of a sense of coherence, and as well as interest, in community participation. Clearly, the computer and artificial intelligence/robotics revolutions have and will increasingly create challenges to larger segments of our population. At the deepest levels, our policy interventions need to ultimately strengthen our relationships and customs which make life more vital, energizing, and comprehensible.

SUMMING UP

We began this foray into the policy arena by considering mounting student debt, an issue that is complicated and ultimately will need to be solved by addressing the many streams that have influenced this unfortunate situation. Often whether it is dealing with

student debt, increasing economic inequalities, or school violence, there are historical factors that will need to be understood so we can both understand what has caused these problems and what policies might be considered.

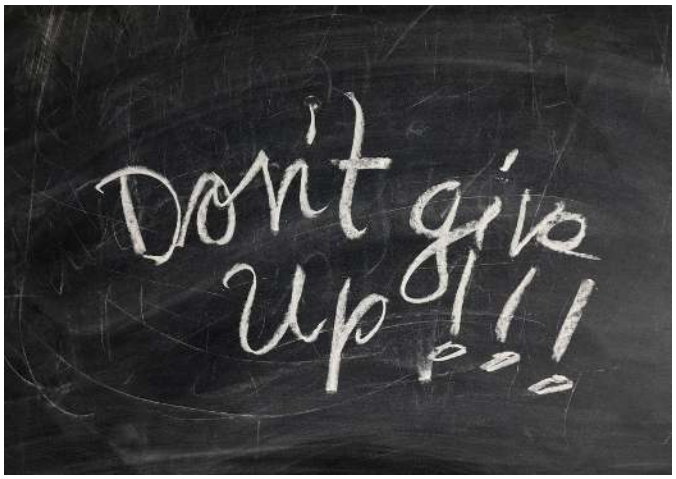


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This type of work at the policy level will often need a long-time commitment, and sticking with these types of issues will more likely occur when you are really invested and committed to a social issue. If the problem is not important to you, it is less likely you will continue to fight for change when the inevitable disappointments and feelings of frustration occur. We can look for guidance from those who battled for civil rights, women's rights and environmental rights, as these struggles occurred over decades. These movements demonstrated that a policy perspective can help overcome even the most significant problems to reach social justice goals.

? Critical Thought Questions

1. What challenges might arise when trying to get a social issue addressed through public policy?
2. A community psychologist has partnered with a local advocacy organization to gain a state-funded mental health center in their community. Using the information on the policymaking process from this chapter, describe how the mental health center may be adopted through policy.
3. Reflect on how policies have negatively impacted your community. What are some ways to change these and implement new ones?
4. Think back to the small wins of the free online textbook project referenced in case study 14.1. What are some small wins you can think of if you were to try to change or create a policy you care about?

Take the Chapter 14 Quiz

View the Chapter 14 Lecture Slides

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10.4.9.2: Community Organizing, Partnerships, and Coalitions

Chapter Fifteen Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Understand why and how communities organize
- Explain bottom-up and top-down approaches to community organizing
- Understand the cycle of organizing

"The basic requirement for the understanding of the politics of change is to recognize the world as it is. We must work with it on its terms if we are to change it to the kind of world we would like it to be. We must first see the world as it is and not as we would like it to be."

— Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*



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At some point, everyone wants something about their community—or how their community is treated—to change. Maybe they feel a law is unfair, or wish their group had more resources. One way to accomplish community goals is to engage in **community organizing**, or the act of engaging in cooperative efforts to promote a community's interests. Just as there are many things people may wish to change, community organizing comes in many shapes and forms and can be used to initiate small changes within a community or larger changes throughout society. Engaging in community organizing involves actively cultivating relationships with a number of people, some of whom may have different ideas about solutions. If it sounds complicated, that's because it is! Thankfully, we have many examples of successful community organizing, some of which come from collaborative partnerships.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS



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To understand collaborative partnerships, let's first break down these two terms into their simplest form. A partnership is a mutual relationship between two or more people. This relationship can be hierarchical, as is the case between you and your boss, or equal, like the relationship between you and your co-workers. Collaboration, on the other hand, is an action. Specifically, collaboration is the action of working with one or more people to produce or create something.

Taken together, a **collaborative partnership** is a reciprocal relationship between two or more people with a shared goal in mind. Collaborative partnerships are often dynamic, characterized by constant change, activity, or progress. Thinking about what you have read so far, what are some examples of collaborative partnerships you have encountered in the case study boxes throughout this book? Before reading further, take a moment to list them. Now that you have revisited the case studies and have a list of collaborative partnerships, are there commonalities between them? Do they differ from what you think of as community organizing? Often in **Community Psychology**, collaborative partnerships have common themes with and key differences from other forms of community organizing. Let's take a look at some of these commonalities and differences.

Organization of Collaborative Partnerships



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As you may recall from the introductory chapter (Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019), a major focus of Community Psychology is that of **social justice**. It is common for community psychologists to develop collaborative partnerships with organizations that serve oppressed groups. As cutbacks in the public sector have become more and more common the past three

decades, collaborative partnerships between community psychologists and community organizations have provided one solution to dwindling resources within organizations (Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001). These partnerships can also assist when the organization lacks expertise in certain areas. For example, community psychologist Amie McKibban partnered with the YMCA Caldwell Center in Evansville, Indiana to assist the organization in gathering feedback from the diverse population the center served to better meet their needs. After completing focus groups with the neighborhood residents, Dr. McKibban and her Community Psychology students developed a needs-based survey that was administered to the same residents. As a result, the center was able to write evidence-based grants and obtain funding for different types of programs that better met the residents' needs (McKibban & Steltenpohl, 2019; see the following case study).

Case Study 15.1
The Caldwell Center Partnership



"After School Program at The Bend" by North Charleston is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The YMCA Caldwell Center is in the Glenwood neighborhood, a racially diverse, economically disadvantaged area with 46.8% of the residents living below poverty and 53.5% having less than a high school education. The goal of working with this YMCA branch was twofold: the project aided community psychologist Amie McKibban in teaching her students real-world, marketable skills relevant to community psychological research, and the community partners received assistance in developing a tangible product that could be utilized to better serve community members' needs. This partnership was established through the University of Southern Indiana's Outreach and Engagement office, which is designed to connect community entities in need of services with researchers on campus. The collaborative effort rested on two demonstrable outcomes for the Caldwell Center: to provide qualitative feedback from different age groups utilizing their services (a bottom-up focus on residents' needs) and to create a quantitative measurement tool that could be used to collect data more easily and quickly once they ended our partnership.

Bottom-Up and Top-Down Approaches

Collaborative partnerships, as illustrated in Case Study 15.1, are often more formal in nature, designed to meet a specific need of the organization, and have a specified timeline with an end goal. Although not always true, collaborative partnerships tend to take a **top-down approach** to social change. That is, they tend to be designed by experts or community leaders who are often not part of the community the social change will impact. Top-down approaches carry with them the benefit of expertise and legitimacy, but also run the risk of reflecting the experiences and world views of the experts. In other words, the needs and voices of the community may be lost in translation (Fawcett, et al., 1995). This approach also runs the risk of reinforcing existing power structures, and as you learned in Chapter 1, inequality in power structures is often the root cause of other inequalities, such as poverty and income.

Often, when we think of community organizing, a top-down approach isn't the first thing that comes to mind. Although this is a beneficial approach in certain settings, sometimes the most powerful forms of social change utilize a **bottom-up approach**, which originate at the **grassroots** level. That is, they are designed by community members rather than experts or professionals. An easy way to illustrate this difference is with mental health care. Seeking the services of a therapist is a top-down approach to mental health care. You seek the expert advice of a therapist to feel better. On the other hand, self-help groups represent a bottom-up approach, where you seek the support of others with mental health difficulties to feel better.

"Community Change Logo.jpg" by Communitychange is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Let's consider another example—that of food insecurity. A top-down approach to food insecurity may include a city mandate that public schools send snacks home with children living in food deserts, where the snacks are provided by those in power. In contrast, a bottom-up approach may include a community garden initiative where local residents plant and tend to gardens, with the food

being provided by those living in the food desert. This is precisely what one group of concerned citizens in Evansville, Indiana did when they started the first Urban Seeds community garden in 2005. Their efforts have since grown into a non-profit organization that serves the region of Southern Indiana. Of course, with any kind of partnership, it is important to consider the potential for **iatrogenic effects**, or unintended consequences. You may find it helpful to talk about values and goals early on in the process of working with community organizations and groups, looking specifically for areas of overlap and differences. It is also a good idea to define important terms, talk about how you will deal with conflict (for example, a disagreement between university researchers and the school district), and discuss how long the relationship will last. Partners should revisit these agreements to make sure any changes are addressed. See Case Study 15.2 for an example and some good ideas to consider.

Case Study 15.2
Innovative Channels of Change in California



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Regina Day Langhout and her team worked with an after-school program in Maplewood, California to aid students in designing, researching, and implementing action research in their school. Students learned about research design and methodology, developed and completed actions to address their selected issues, and presented their findings. As the partnership developed, Langhout and her team ran into challenges around limited budgets, power differentials between students and their school institutions, limitations on what projects were considered "worth" pursuing, and what the "right" channels of change were. It was important for Langhout's team to continue to communicate with students and faculty throughout the partnership and address these challenges as they came up (Kohfeldt, Chhun, Grace, & Langhout, 2011).

Now that you know the difference between these two approaches, think about changes you would like to see in your own community. What type of approach do you feel would be best to achieve that change? Sometimes figuring out which approach may be best can be difficult, and community psychologists generally agree that neither approach is best, as they both offer benefits. Whereas bottom-up approaches tend to embrace the values inherent in Community Psychology, top-down approaches are often needed for their resources—such as funding and expertise. In many cases, like the one described in Case Study 15.1, the two approaches are combined in hopes of achieving the best results.

COMMUNITY COALITIONS



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Let's go back to the things you would like to see changed in your local community. Is there something on that seems insurmountable? Perhaps a problem that seems impossible to change? Oftentimes this is the case when we think about social problems and their solutions. Indeed, some social problems are wide-reaching and require long-term, complex solutions that extend beyond the scope of collaborative partnerships. **Community coalitions**, on the other hand, tend to tackle larger social issues by bringing together a representation of community citizens and organizations—both private and public—situated in a way to address large social problems at multiple levels within a community. Like collaborative partnerships, community coalitions have become more popular in recent years following cutbacks to funding for social services, therefore putting pressure on communities to do more with less (Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary 2001).

Given the organizational structure of community coalitions, members often agree upon a mission, vision, and set of shared values, all of which help coalitions write and implement action plans. These action plans help guide the coalition in their work, whether the work is carried out by the coalition itself or by affiliated organizations (Wolff, 2001a). Not only do coalitions help strengthen **citizen participation**, a staple of Community Psychology, they hold the potential to change policy at local and state levels, and increase community resources (Wolff, 2001b). To illustrate coalitions in action, let's consider two very different community coalitions—one that came out of a grassroots effort to tackle a host of community issues where the work is done by the coalition itself (Case Study 15.3a), and one that developed over decades of work to decrease economic disparities, where much of the work is carried out by affiliated organizations (Case Study 15.3b).

Case Study 15.3a
Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment



"NARCAN Simulation" by Penn Libraries-TRL is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment is an interfaith coalition comprised of 22 religious organizations in Southern Indiana. It started by members of different religious congregations coming together to better understand what community issues were mutually important to them through listening sessions, a practice that continues today and draws hundreds of community members from different congregations. Through these listening sessions, members decide on one or two issues to address throughout the year and develop an evidence-based action plan. One example of how this coalition impacted community practice was their success in reaching an agreement with three county sheriff's offices and the city fire department to equip officers and firefighters with Narcan, a life-saving medication for drug overdoses.

Watch this this PSA on the success of a similar approach to drug overdoses in Massachusetts.

Case Study 15.3b
The Community Action Program of Evansville



"Coalition Builds New Playground in One Day for Chicora-Cherokee Community" by North Charleston is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The Community Action Program of Evansville is a multi-organization coalition that developed under the auspices of the City of Evansville in the 1960s with the mission of promoting economic and social self-sufficiency for the area's racial minority populations. The coalition develops action plans under the guidance of a Board of Directors consisting of representatives from three different counties that represent both the public and private sector. Twenty-four community programs are housed under this coalition— including programs such as Head Start, Financial Literacy for Home Buyers, and Emergency Need Pantry—with multiple organizations carrying out the work. One example of how this coalition impacted community practice was in their development of partnerships to provide affordable, apartment-style housing for multi-person households.

THE CYCLE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

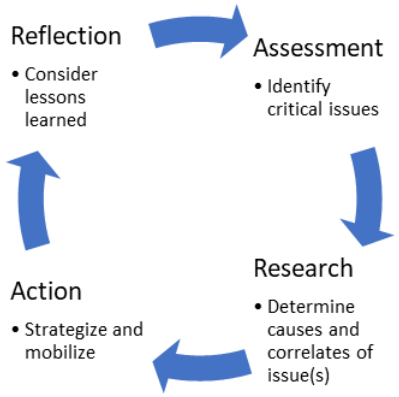


Figure 1. "Cycle of Community Organizing" by Amie R. McKibban and Crystal N. Steltenpohl

Successful community organizing tends to follow a cycle: assessment, research, mobilization (action), and reflection (Speer, Hughey, Gensheimer, & Adams-Leavitt, 1995). A student organization wanting to improve access to mental health resources on their university campus may first *assess* what resources already exist on campus. They may also have one-on-one or small group meetings with students, staff, and faculty to better understand their experiences. If they can, they may also do a survey of a representative sample of students. Their main questions may be things like: What issues do students face when dealing with their own mental health? Are students able to meet with counselors when they need to? Are there differences in what groups readily have access to resources? Do faculty know what the process of referring students to various resources on campus looks like?

After this assessment stage, the student organization will want to enter the *research stage*. Here, it will be important to meet with campus leaders to understand what funding and other resources are allocated to mental health. They may meet with the dean of students to discuss different programming goals or the counseling center to understand what mental health concerns students come into the center with most often and how those concerns are addressed. The student organization may hold public meetings on the issue for students, staff, and faculty to raise concerns or to build public support. This will help them move into the *action phase*.

In the action phase, the student organization may host events raising awareness of mental health concerns and how to address them, with a call for more resources on campus dedicated to helping students thrive socioemotionally. They may create and distribute a petition calling for administrators and the board of trustees to allocate more funding to hire more counselors or provide the counseling center more or updated space. They may even participate in sit-ins, march on campus, or publish opinion pieces in the student or local newspapers. With the increased use of social media, they may create a social media campaign, incorporating the use of hashtags and encouraging community members to share their stories.

After these actions have been taken, the student organization will move into the *reflection stage*. Here, student leaders and their allies will want to reflect on what happened. What went well? What didn't go well? What's next? As Saul Alinsky (1971) suggests in *Rules for Radicals*, ideal organizers are curious ("Is this true?"), irreverent ("Just because it's always been this way, does that make it right?"), and imaginative ("Let's try to come up with another way to do this!"). They have a good sense of humor, a bit of a blurred vision of a better world, and an organized personality. Nurturing these qualities would help increase the quality of the student leaders' reflections about their experiences. As the student leaders engage in reflection, they will also be looking forward to the next *assessment* stage.

It is important to recognize that time may be needed for communities to see the full effects of their efforts, as systemic change often takes time. As changemakers are considering what actions to take, they should always be mindful of intended impact. What outcomes would these student leaders hope for? Perhaps the goal is shorter wait times for students needing access to services, or a reduction in the number of medical withdrawals for mental health concerns. These are easy to measure and track, assuming the students have access to these metrics. Some outcomes, however, are harder to measure: how do we measure a reduction in stigma against those with mental health-related diagnoses? For something like that, it will be important to consider change over time, both on campus and nationally. Perhaps it would be good for students to work with faculty to develop a yearly survey to estimate attitudes surrounding mental health issues and maybe even **prevalence** of common mental health diagnoses.

As you might be able to see, measuring impact can get complicated pretty quickly, and often requires change leaders and others to think ahead and envision what factors will positively and negatively affect their ability to judge how things have gotten better or worse as a result of the actions they take. Some of the common obstacles found when trying to measure outcomes of coalitions include:

- Issues surrounding how representative their coalition and outcomes are compared to coalitions and outcomes generally
- Control of the independent variable (the coalition)
- Identification of extraneous variables and interactions between other extraneous variables
- Figuring out what outcomes to measure and how to measure them
- Changes over time in understanding and measurement of issues, and
- Fighting the desire to present results in a favorable way (Berkowitz, 2001).

As we have learned throughout this textbook, communities can vary widely in their membership, the contexts they inhabit, and their access to resources. While the complexity of working on and measuring the impact of community work makes this work challenging, Berkowitz encourages us to rise to that challenge and find new ways to measure what we need to measure in a reasonable and scientifically valid way.



"Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC) – Minneapolis Vigil" by Tony Webster is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Typically, when communities organize, their goals fall within two broad categories: **resource provision**, or ensuring a community is provided with a resource it is lacking (a form of **first-order change**), and **transformation**, or fundamentally changing a community and its structures such that resources and power are more equitably distributed (a form of **second-order change**; Hale, 2014). For example, a community may be interested in improving the educational outcomes of its children. If the community's focus is on resource provision, they may push for smaller student-to-teacher classroom ratios or better pay for teachers. If the community's focus is on transformation, they may push for a change in culture whereby community members share ownership of students' educational outcomes with teachers and create programs that engage all members of the community.

Those who put transformational change above resource provision argue that resources are necessary for communities and community change, but without attention to changing the systems that caused the lack of resources, there is a danger of recreating systems that allow for some groups to be left behind. For instance, if a community pushes for better pay for teachers, this may benefit teachers in some schools or school districts more than others.

A key consideration for someone interested in community organizing is finding ways to keep volunteers engaged; organizations can only be as effective as their volunteers are when working together over an extended period. Some estimates suggest only one-third of first-time meeting attendees show up to later meetings (Christens & Speer, 2011). So, what factors affect whether someone stays involved? Some factors that seem to positively influence attendance include face-to-face meetings designed to build interpersonal relationships and attendance at research related actions (see above, where we talk about the research stage of community organizing).

Capacity Building

For change to happen, a community must engage in a process known as **capacity building**, or a process in which communities or organizations work to improve their collective skills and resources. In other words, before actions happen, communities need to make sure they can do the things they need to do to make that action happen and sustain the results they want. These things can include tangible resources like money or space, power, leadership, or the networks of people who care about an issue.

But why is capacity building important? Engaging in capacity building can improve **community readiness** for members to do the things they need to do for change to happen. For example, one study of seven Kansas communities trying to reduce underage drinking found that increasing a community's readiness through capacity building resulted in new programs, policies, and practice changes being more easily facilitated (Anderson-Carpenter, Watson-Thompson, Jones, & Chaney, 2017).

Table 1. *Stages of Community Readiness*	
No Awareness	• Community has no knowledge about the issue or local efforts to address it. • Leadership and community members believe the issue is not a concern. • There are no resources available for dealing with the issue.
Denial/Resistance	• Leadership and community members believe this issue is not a concern or think it can't or shouldn't be addressed. • Only a few members know about the issue, and there may be misconceptions among community members about the issue and current efforts. • Community members and/or leaders do not support using available resources to address this issue.
Vague Awareness	• A few community members have at least heard about local efforts but know little about them. • Leadership and community members believe this issue may be a concern in the community. They show no immediate motivation to act. • Community members have only vague knowledge about the issue. • There are limited resources that could be used for further current efforts.
Preplanning	• Some community members have at least heard about the issue and local efforts but know little about them. • Leadership and community members acknowledge this issue is a concern and that something must be done to address it. • There are limited resources for further efforts to address the issue.
Preparation	• Most community members have at least heard about local efforts.
	• Leadership is actively supportive of continuing or improving current efforts or in developing new effort. • The community is concerned and wants to do something about it. • Community members have basic knowledge about causes, consequences, signs, and symptoms. • There are some resources for further efforts to address the issue; community members or leaders are actively working to secure these resources.
Initiation	• Most community members have at least basic knowledge of local efforts and current efforts. • Leadership plays a key role in planning, developing and/or implementing new, modified, or increased efforts. • The community feels a sense of responsibility, and some community members are involved in

	addressing the issue. • Resources have been obtained and/or allocated to support further efforts.
Stabilization	• Most community members have more than basic knowledge of the issue and local efforts, including names and purposes of specific efforts, target audiences, and other specific information. • Leadership is actively involved in ensuring or improving the long-term viability of the efforts to address this issue. • The community has taken responsibility and is involved. • A considerable part of allocated resources for efforts are from sources that are expected to provide continuous support.
Expansion/Confirmation	• Most community members have considerable knowledge of the issue and local efforts, including the level of program effectiveness. • Leadership plays a key role in expanding and improving efforts.
	• Most of the community strongly supports efforts. Participation is high. • A considerable part of allocated resources are expected to provide continuous support. Community members are looking into support for new efforts.
Community Ownership	• Most community members have considerable and detailed knowledge of the issue and local efforts. • Leadership is continually reviewing evaluation results of the efforts and is modifying financial support accordingly. • Most segments of the community are highly supportive and actively involved. • Diversified resources and funds are secured, and efforts are ongoing.

Note. Adapted from Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research, 2014.

Community readiness typically moves through nine stages (see *The Stages of Community Readiness* above) and can increase or decrease depending on the community issue, the intensity of community efforts, and external events. Community readiness to implement interventions to prevent underage drinking, for example, may drastically increase following a terrible car accident where underage drivers had been drinking. Case Study 15.4 provides an example of community psychologists using stages of community readiness to guide their intervention.

Case Study 15.4
Community Readiness to Address Youth Tobacco Use



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Jason, Pokorny, Ji, and Kunz (2006) found that police departments and citizen community groups are often in different stages of readiness to change regarding reducing youth access to cigarettes. Some communities initially had minimal awareness that a problem existed locally and had no intention to invest in change, whereas others had an awareness of the problem, but no commitment to action and still others had a clear recognition of the problem and willingness to make some preliminary trials. A few other communities were ready to work hard at programs that should lead to behavior change. When working with a community in the denial stage, the Community Psychology research group often needed first to show them data from the schools to indicate that there was, in fact, a significant problem with youth smoking in their communities. The researchers also showed them data, which had been collected from the assessment of local merchants' tobacco sales patterns, indicating that these merchants were illegally selling tobacco to minors. When the research group worked with communities in the preparation stage, police chiefs often found it helpful to rate the community's level of readiness and where the community might like to be in a year so that the community could monitor their anticipated changes. The very process of discussing these issues often facilitated the communities in preparing for change and taking action. Sometimes the assessment called for the development of new tobacco control ordinances for towns, and the community psychologists were able to help the communities bring about important policy changes. It was only by understanding this readiness to take action that they could tailor the interventions to the needs of each community, and slowly work with them to become more motivated to prepare, take and maintain active social policies that could reduce youth access to

tobacco and ultimately youth rates of smoking. As an example, for over a year, the research team worked collaboratively with one community to insure that this ordinance was carefully crafted and had broad community support to pass. The research team was invited to testify at a local city counsel meeting to provide evidence supporting the need for the revised ordinance. This policy development and advocacy were not required in every town, but this example shows how the team needed to carefully target their collaborative work to address the unique needs and readiness to change of each community. As a result of the success of this study, these community psychologists next used their Community Readiness Interview Scale in a larger randomized study involving 24 communities.

OTHER KEY CONCEPTS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING



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Collective Efficacy and Participatory Efficacy



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As we have learned throughout this chapter, the work of community psychologists relies heavily on community members acting collectively and intentionally (Foster-Fishman, et al., 2001). It also relies on a sense of **collective efficacy**, that is, the belief that the actions of the group can be successful in creating change (Zimmerman, 2000). Collective efficacy depends on many factors, such as the task at hand, access to resources, and leadership. It also depends on personal **participatory efficacy**—your own belief that you can effectively participate in community organizations. Both vary from situation to situation. For example, you may feel that the student group you belong to can effectively change the campus housing visitor policy (collective efficacy) and that your research skills will contribute to the group's efforts (participatory efficacy). On the other hand, you may feel that the local homeless coalition you volunteer for will effectively establish partnerships for affordable housing (collective efficacy) but feel that you cannot contribute effectively to that mission (participatory efficacy).

Burnout in Community Organizing



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We can all relate to feelings of stress. In community partnerships and coalitions, stress can lead to **burnout** – that feeling of overall exhaustion when there's too much pressure (stress) and not enough sources of satisfaction or feelings of support (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2000). When coalition or team members experience burnout, it comes as no surprise that the quality of their work or willingness to participate deteriorates. Researchers have found six organizational factors that contribute to burnout: high workload, little influence in decision making, inadequate rewards (e.g., compensation, recognition), lack of social support, lack of fairness, and disagreement on values (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Effective leadership and organizational capacity can aid in

preventing many of these factors, and the way in which you define the social problem and decide how to change it can make a difference.

Small Wins Approach



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Think about the last time you received a high score on a paper you put a lot of time and effort into writing. It felt good, right? Successes, and the recognition of those successes, can go a long way in community organizing. When the social issue your organization is tackling has opposition, seems insurmountable, or is controversial, it is important to identify and establish **small wins** early in the planning phase. Organizational theorist Karl Weick (1986) found that when proposed changes are wide-sweeping and extensive, it tends to increase feelings of threat, and hence, increases a community's resistance to change, and inaction among change agents. However, when proposed changes are small, concrete, and of moderate importance, risks seem more tolerable and manageable. These "small wins" also have the added benefit of attracting allies, preventing inaction, and deterring opponents. Take a moment to read the excerpt from Weick himself on small changes in Case Study 15.5.

Case Study 15.5
The Small Changes and Big Success of the Task Force on Gay Liberation



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"The successful effort by the Task Force on Gay Liberation to change the way in which the Library of Congress classified books on the gay liberation movement is another example of a small win. Prior to 1972, books on this topic were assigned numbers reserved for books on abnormal sexual relations, sexual crimes, and sexual perversions (HQ 71-471). After 1972, the classifications were changed so that homosexuality was no longer a subcategory of abnormal relations, and all entries formerly described as 'abnormal sex relations' were now described as varieties of sexual life (Spector & Kitsuse, 1977, pp. 13-14). Labels and technical classifications, the mundane work of catalogers, have become the turf on which claims are staked, wins are frequent, and seemingly small changes attract attention, recruit allies, and give opponents second thoughts" (Weick, 1986, p. 42).

SUMMING UP



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Community members may engage in community organizing for many reasons and in a variety of ways, though typically these goals fall within two categories: resource provision and transformation. As we learned in this chapter, collaborative partnerships may be organized using a top-down approach, where communities work with experts who are likely not a part of the affected community, or a bottom-up approach, which is driven by the community members themselves. Community coalitions tackle larger societal issues by bringing together people from across the community and its organizations.

Regardless of the exact method, community organizing often follows a cycle in which communities assess critical issues affecting the community, research causes and correlates of the issues, act through strategization and mobilization, and reflect on lessons learned. Successful organizers engage in capacity building and improving community readiness, both of which increase a community's chances of success. Part of increasing community readiness involves building a sense of participatory and collective efficacy, which involve people's sense that they—and their community—can change things. When things don't go well, community members may experience burnout, or feelings of overall exhaustion that negatively impact one's ability to engage in community organizing, which is why it's important to focus on small wins.

? Critical Thought Questions

1. What skills do you think a good organizer has? Some of these skills are individual-focused (for example, organizational skills), but others might be interpersonal (e.g. collaboration).
2. Imagine that a friend came to you and wanted to improve the amount, quality, and cost of vegetarian and vegan options on campus, among other environmentally-conscious actions they would like to eventually take. Take your friend through the cycle of organizing, highlighting potential opportunities and challenges that may be experienced along the way.
3. Think about a social issue that is important to you. What is a bottom-up approach to address this issue? How about a top-down approach?
4. What are some examples of collaborative partnerships in your local community? How about community coalitions?
5. Think about the drug and alcohol prevention program in your own school. What are some possible positive and negative effects of that program?

Take the Chapter 15 Quiz

View the Chapter 15 Lecture Slides

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10.4.9.3: Behavioral Community Approaches

Chapter Sixteen Objectives

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain how large, complicated problems can be broken down into smaller solvable ones
- Identify the importance of studying and bringing about change in observable behaviors
- Understand how behavioral approaches have been used in Community Psychology



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You may have heard of **B. F. Skinner**, who pioneered the use of behavioral approaches to show how rewards and punishments can change the behaviors of animals and people. This behavioral revolution has had a tremendous effect on psychology in terms of how therapy is now practiced in countries throughout the world. The old Freudian perspective has been replaced by a variety of behavioral-type therapies, used to help patients with a wide variety of common problems such as anxiety and depressive disorders. Most behavioral studies have been conducted in hospitals in inpatient settings or other types of institutions with much less behavioral research occurring in community settings such as homes or neighborhoods (Hanley et al., 2003). When behavioral-type work is conducted in community settings and has the values from the field of Community Psychology (as reviewed in Chapter 1, Jason, Glantsman, O'Brien, & Ramian, 2019), it has been referred to as **Behavioral Community Psychology**.



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As we will see in this chapter, the Behavioral Community Psychology approach allows for a more focused and targeted method to define and change a range of community and social problems. In a sense, this approach breaks down large and complex problems into smaller ones that are much more manageable to solve. By specifying and measuring specific behaviors, such as littering or

tobacco use, behavioral community psychologists can chart those behaviors over time to determine whether or not a particular intervention is effective. We will show in this chapter how these types of practical and easy-to-implement interventions can lead to what are called **small wins**, which can be reinforcing and sustain the work of community psychologists over time. We can change the world through being extremely strategic and focused by breaking down large problems into smaller ones that are solvable.

Ok, let's give an example of a problem that seemed very difficult to solve. If you can believe it involved uncollected dog droppings in Chicago. There as a time when nobody knew how to even approach this problem, let alone study or solve it. But as you will see, by collecting data and showing that there was a possible solution, change did occur for not only Chicago but also other urban areas in the US. The behavioral community psychology Case Study 16.1 was carried out at a time when there were no formal laws that required dog owners to pick up after their dogs.

Case Study 16.1
Getting the Scoop on Behavioral Interventions



Photo by Dr. Leonard A. Jason

Leonard Jason invited his Alderman in Chicago to his community psychology class, and Jason said to himself that he would tackle whatever the Alderman mentioned as the most pressing community issue. When informed that it was uncollected dog feces, Jason's mouth fell open in disbelief, but he pledged to work on this issue. Jason's team first counted all fresh dog feces within an eight by five block area surrounding DePaul University. The fact that 1,147 droppings were within this area suggested that dog litter was a serious and prevalent problem within this community. Next, the team for five hours daily recorded the number of dogs, the number who defecated, and the number of dog defecations picked up by their owners. In addition, all defecations were picked up and weighed each morning. During the baseline phase, few dog owners were observed to pick up after their dogs and over 19 pounds of dog defecations were deposited in the target block. When dog owners were given instructions and a demonstration concerning how to use a plastic bag to pick-up dog feces, 82% of the dog owners proceeded to pick up after their dogs.

These findings indicated that the prompting intervention, which applied instructions and modeling, effectively motivated dog owners to dispose of their dogs' waste properly.

At the study's end, the Chicago alderman asked Jason to present the above data at City Hall in order to support a proposed ordinance which would require dog owners to have in their possession a pooper scooper when walking dogs. This ordinance was passed by the City Council, making Chicago one of the first cities in the country to pass a pooper scooper ordinance. The alderman to whom Jason had originally provided the data mentioned to him that this study, which received considerable media exposure, had helped change the politicians' perception of the problem. The Alderman wrote to Jason: "In the past, this problem has often been scoffed at and not taken seriously. Your comments regarding the dog defecation problem altered that perception greatly." Chicago's ordinance became a model for other similar ordinances in towns around the country (Jason, 2013).

Although the subject matter of this study is a bit hard to believe, it is a true story. It shows the usefulness of listening to the community for ideas about what is important, even if it sometimes involves getting one's hands dirty in the process. In other words, the subject matter of the intervention was decided upon by the needs of the community, and this is a critical part of behavioral community interventions. Also, by focusing on one small area and collecting data on dogs and their owners, it was possible to show that change could occur. In fact, it was found through the behavioral intervention that dog owners were willing to pick up after their dogs. Most importantly, the findings were transmitted to the legislative process, and a new ordinance came into law that made a real difference to the community. By getting into the trenches, getting our hands dirty, and being willing to study dog litter, we were able to influence dog owners to pick up. Just think what else is possible to accomplish.



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Some of the first developments of learning theory started in the 1890s when Ivan Pavlov demonstrated the importance of the environment on behavior. Pavlov wanted to measure the amount of salivation in dogs when they were given food, predicting that the dogs would begin to salivate in response to being fed. A researcher would bring food to the dogs whenever he walked into the lab. Pavlov noticed that after a while, the dogs began to salivate in response to hearing the researcher's footsteps, meaning they began to associate the footsteps with being fed, which caused a behavioral response (e.g., salivation).

Pavlov (1897) examined this discovery further with a series of experiments, in which the dogs underwent numerous trials and were exposed to a sound that was immediately followed by food. Pavlov discovered that when he just made the sound that accompanied food, the dogs began to salivate even if the food was not presented. Through the systematic control of the environment (i.e., onset of a sound and delivery of food), the animals learned to associate the sound with the food that followed. This fundamental learning process is referred to as **Classical Conditioning**.

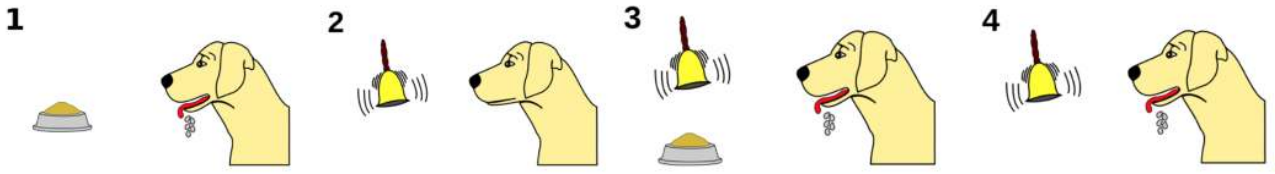
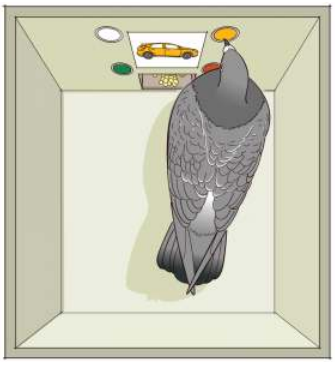


Figure 1 "Pavlov's dog conditioning" by MaxxL is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0



"Operant Conditioning Involves Choice" by Mark E. Bouton is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Later, B. F. Skinner further examined behavioral responses and developed **Operant Conditioning** through the use of small boxes that contained a lever that lab rats pressed to release food. In these experiments, a rat was placed in the box and then observed. At first, the rat scurried around and then accidentally pulled the lever that released the pellets of food. In successive trials, Skinner observed that the time in which it took the rat to release the pellets of food decreased each time it was placed in the box. The rat began to learn that pulling the lever resulted in the delivery of food. Skinner taught the rats to pull the lever by rewarding the behavior, which became the basis for Operant Conditioning**.** This theory builds upon the work of Pavlov in understanding the relationship between one's environment and behavior. Skinner coined the term **Behavioral Analysis** (1953) to systematically demonstrate how the behavior of individuals and groups is influenced by the environment. His work led the way to understand how animal and human behavior changed through reinforcement and punishment.

These theories demonstrate the importance of the environment on shaping behavior. Environments have a powerful influence on individuals, and this work has provided insights for community psychologists as they try to understand larger and more complex ecological systems.

APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS

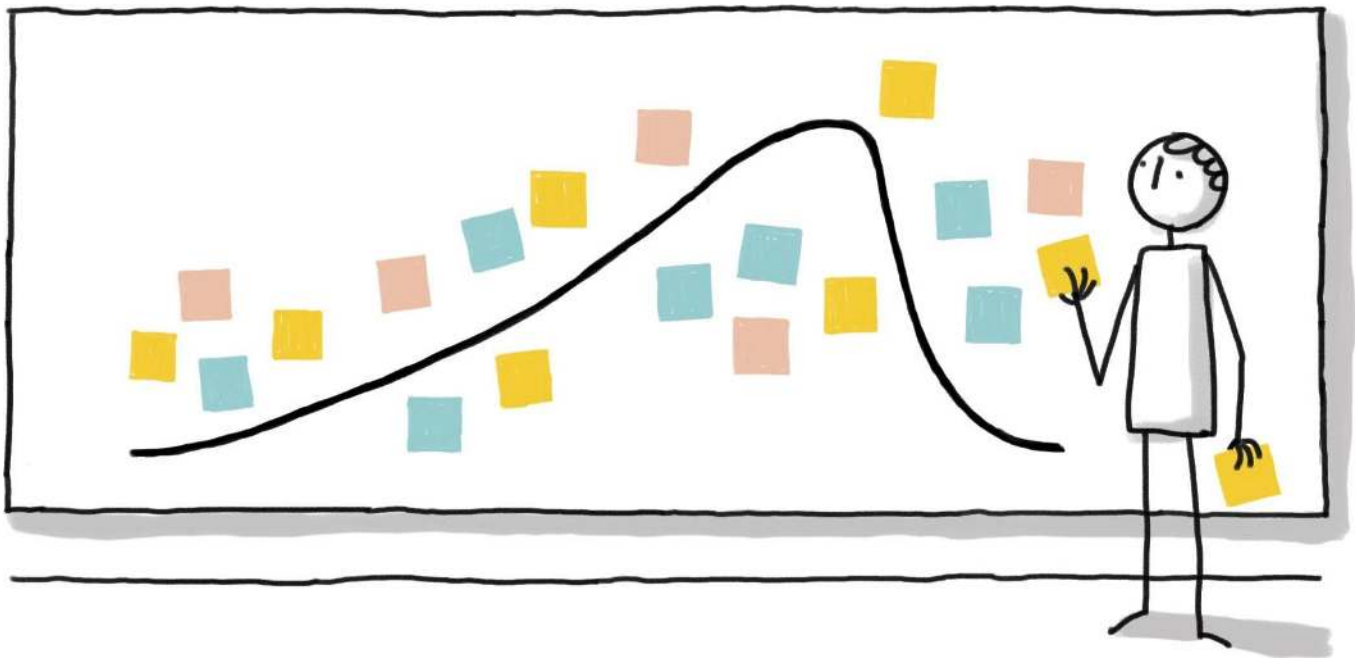


Figure 7.5" by Rosenfeld Media is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Behavioral community psychologists often use the term **Applied Behavior Analysis** to understand and explain human behavior as a function of the interaction between behavior and the environment. Applied Behavior Analysis is rooted in **Learning Theory**, which focuses on objectively observable behaviors and how learning occurs when individuals respond to environmental factors or stimuli. Positive reinforcement and punishment can be used to teach and sustain behavior and shape individual as well as community behavior.

Another term that is often used in the behavioral literature is **Behavior Modification**, which refers to the systematic application of learning principles and techniques to assess and change an individual's behavior (Martin & Pear, 2015). Often the terms Behavior Modification and Applied Behavior Analysis are used interchangeably within the field of Behavioral Community Psychology. Below are some terms used frequently in this field:

Positive Reinforcement leads to increases in the chances that a behavior will continue to occur. On the other hand, **Punishment** often leads to the reduction of the rate or likelihood of a behavior, which can result in the behavior being **Extinguished.**



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Here is an example: Imagine that you see a person driving on the highway at a speed exceeding the local limit and the police give the person a speeding ticket. It is possible that this ticket (i.e., consequence) reduces the likelihood of future speeding behavior. So, the person's behavior is changed by the consequences as they now drive at the speed limit.

Shaping of behavior involves establishing a complex set of behaviors using a set of steps. Teaching a child to cross a street involves teaching several behaviors connected in a certain order. This might look something like this: walk up to the corner, push the button to activate the crosswalk and traffic light, wait until you get the correct "walk" signal and the cars are stopped, and then quickly get across the street before the light changes.

Stimulus control highlights how characteristics of the environment might influence the occurrence of a behavior. To give an example of this principle, in Case Study 16.2 below, a group of Behavioral Community Psychology investigators examined the effects of altering traffic light pattern sequences on driver compliance at a busy, urban intersection in Chicago. In this case study, you will see that by making a small change to the traffic light pattern, car accidents were reduced.

Case Study 16.2
A Change in Lights: A Reduction in Car Accidents



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This study began when a hazardous situation was observed with two sets of traffic lights that were separated by only about 100 feet. Drivers that were stopped at the first traffic light that was red, next saw this light turn green, and they began driving to the second traffic light which was in the process of turning from yellow to red. The drivers already had waited a long time for the first light to turn green, and were probably annoyed at facing another light that was going to delay them. As a consequence, more than half of the drivers sped right by the next light changing from yellow to red and this resulted in many accidents. Working with officials from the city of Chicago, the investigators then slightly altered light pattern sequences so that when the second set of traffic lights were approached, the lights were not changing from yellow to red. This small change resulted in almost all of the

drivers not passing through a yellow or red light at the second traffic light. Following the completion of the study, the traffic engineer approved the permanent alteration of the light timing pattern that increased traffic rule compliance. Accident data collected before and after the light timing changes indicated a reduction in automobile accidents (Jason, Neal, & Marinakis, 1985).

ADDITIONAL BEHAVIORAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Several additional important developments in the behavioral approach have occurred. For example, Albert Bandura (1986) discovered that behavior is also learned from the environment through the process of observation (see the video below for a brief history of Bandura's Bobo Doll Experiment).



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://press.rebus.community/introductiontocommunitypsychology/?p=766

Bandura showed that it is possible to learn by just observing another person engaging in a particular behavior. So, a child might watch a parent use a fork to eat food, and then the child might engage in that behavior from just watching the parent engaging in the behavior. This work has helped scientists better understand how aggressive behavior can be learned by youth, and this can occur when youth observe violence being reinforced. In addition, Bandura helped us better understand the importance of the thoughts and feelings that intervene between the stimuli and responses. In a sense, we are active information processors, and therefore cognitive factors are also involved in learning.



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A final development that has attracted considerable media attention is the emergence of the field of behavioral economics, which is derived from the fields of psychology and economics. In essence, we are susceptible to temptations and often make bad decisions even though there are better options. For example, it is not uncommon to eat high fat and high-calorie snacks rather than healthier foods, which has resulted in an obesity crisis in the US. Reed, Niileksela, and Kaplan (2013) suggest that this apparent irrationality can still be understood based on the principles of operant learning. Some risk-taking behaviors, such as unhealthy food choices, have more reinforcing value than less risk-taking behaviors such as healthy food choices. Often high fat and high-calorie foods are appealing and tasty, which reinforces continuing to eat them. Therefore, it is possible to understand responses such as these types of food choices (even though these foods can lead to obesity and other health complications) by the fact that these behaviors are being reinforced.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF BEHAVIORAL COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY



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Most applications of Applied Behavior Analysis and Behavior Modification have been within the **medical model**, such as working one on one with patients having severe developmental disabilities. However, Behavioral Community Psychology interventions have addressed issues such as littering (Clark, Burgess, & Hendee, 1972); recycling (Zulas, 2009); illegal sales of cigarettes to minors (Jason, Ji, Anes, & Birkhead, 1991); drug addiction (Silverman, Roll, & Higgins, 2008); bullying in schools (Embry, 2002); blood donations (Ferrari & Jason, 1990); and identifying and conducting behavioral analyses on concerns of community members (Arellano et al., 2016; Balcazar, Garcia-Iriarte & Suarez-Balcazar, 2009; Suarez-Balcazar & Balcazar, 2016). Many of these interventions have embraced Community Psychology values summarized by Fawcett (1991), and include:

1) Valuing collaborative relationships
2) Focusing on behavior-environment relationships of importance to communities
3) Conducting research focusing on modifiable and sustainable environmental events
4) Involving setting and research measures relevant to community concerns
5) Using measurement systems that capture the dynamic relationship between behavior and environment
6) Developing interventions owned by the community and sustainable with local resources
7) Providing interventions focused on maximizing impact and benefits to the community
8) Spreading effective interventions
9) Communicating effectively to the community **stakeholders**
10) Contributing to fundamental change. These values have guided the work of behavioral community psychologists (Glenwick & Jason, 1980).

Below are case studies that provide several examples of Behavioral Community Psychology interventions. Case Study 16.3 shows how behavioral community psychologists collaborated with community-based organizations to influence legislative officials to support laws that contributed to **second-order change**, in this case protecting the safety of infants and children. Before child car restraints became law, thousands of children in the US were either injured or killed in car accidents. In fact, the leading cause of death for children under one year of age was car accidents due to not being protected in infant seats.

Case Study 16.3
A Behavioral Community Psychology Approach: Changing Laws and Saving Lives


27/03/2015
WARNING
GRACO

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A national coalition of behavioral community psychologists, that included Leonard Jason and Stephen Fawcett, was trying to influence legislators to pass legislation that would require infants and children to wear a seatbelt or to be placed in an appropriate car or infant seat while in cars. In Illinois, Jason and his colleagues worked with a community-based organization that was trying to pass needed child restraint legislation. Their hunch was that data gathered on behavioral and self-report information could be used to influence the debate about passing needed legislation. For months, they looked inside cars to see whether or not infants and children were placed in car restraints. They also used telephone surveys to collect information about the public's attitude toward the child-restraint bill. The goal was to use both data collection on attitudes and firsthand observations to build a more convincing case when trying to influence policy officials. Although they were also working closely with an Illinois organization that was advocating for the passage of this bill, they were unsure if the data would persuade legislators. They sent the collected information to a randomly selected half of the Illinois state legislators prior to a vote on the child passenger restraint bill. In that letter, the senators were informed that 140 children in Illinois were killed and 25,828 injured in automobile accidents over the last six years in Illinois. The authors also pointed out that, through their observations, 93% of Illinois children were not placed in adequate restraints while riding in cars. They also provided the legislators with the results of the survey, in which 78% of adults supported the child passenger restraint bill. By sending this critical information to half of the legislators, they were able to see whether the targeted letter had made a difference in encouraging support for this important legislation. Significantly more senators (79%) who received the information voted for passage of the bill, whereas only 53% of senators who did not receive the letter voted for the bill. Their intervention was a success, and even the governor requested a copy of the findings before finally signing the legislation. With the passage of the legislation, for children between the ages of one to four, the use of appropriate car restraints increased from 13% to 42%. Rates of appropriate restraints increased from 49% to 74% for infants less than one year of age. Most importantly, children's deaths caused by traffic accidents decreased by 53%. Comments made by members of the Illinois Child Passenger Safety Association included: "The data were very, very interesting. It was a building block in the passage of the bill." "Those who had the data and understood them, it made them more forceful and vocal in support of the bill" (Jason & Rose, 1984).

For many social and community problems, working at the policy level can have more substantial and enduring results, as the car restraint case study illustrated. Psychologists often provide therapy to those who are injured in car accidents, but there are clear advantages to using our more preventive behavioral community psychology strategies to change laws that influence parents to appropriately protect their children while being driven in cars.

The next case study illustrates how the community researchers used principles of Applied Behavior Analysis to study a concrete behavior—compliance with traffic signs by drivers–and developed operational definitions of terms to observe the behavior in a community context. The authors worked with community residents to identify an issue of concern to them and their children with disabilities: traffic safety. As you will see, specific roles for the investigators included developing a strong reciprocal partnership with the community, identifying issues the community cared about, helping design a coding system to observe the behavior in context, and developing action steps to address the issue in collaboration with the community. The community in this example refers to Latino parents of youth and young adults with disabilities.

Case Study 16.4
Familias Saludables (Healthy Families)



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Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar and her team, in collaboration with residents of a predominantly Latino neighborhood and staff from a local community agency, initially designed a healthy lifestyles program called *Healthy Families (Familias Saludables)* to address a concern identified by the community about a lack of culturally relevant healthy lifestyles programming for their families with developmental disabilities (Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2016; Suarez-Balcazar et al., 2018). Eight evidence-based sessions were then provided that focused on enhancing healthy routines at home and in the community, and addressed neighborhood issues that

families cared about. During these sessions, many mothers reported cars in their neighborhood driving over the speed limit or failing to stop for crosswalks, leading them to worry for their children's safety and their own. Furthermore, one of her collaborators (The Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, n.d.) was at the time sponsoring a city-wide effort to collect walkability data across Chicago's diverse neighborhoods and address walkability safety concerns. The lack of pedestrian traffic safety in program participants' neighborhoods further made worse the numerous environmental barriers that youth and young adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities already faced to participating in their communities (e.g., over-stimulating sensory features, challenging physical layout). Utilizing Applied Behavior Analysis, the team designed a study in collaboration with their community partners to examine the behavior of traffic patterns in this neighborhood.

To assess the neighborhood's walkability, data on traffic safety were collected based on direct observations. Independent researchers stood on street corners throughout the target area to observe and record traffic patterns including the number of cars failing to stop for the crosswalk, the smoothness of sidewalks, the speed of cars, and general street conditions. Data were collected at 25 intersections and focused on the behavior of car drivers on selected neighborhood streets, previously identified by community residents and agency staff as places/streets frequented by local families due to proximity to parks, schools, places of worship, and stores. Behaviors of interest that were recorded included drivers complying with street signs, drivers engaging in a complete stop whereby the car is not moving for a minimum of five seconds, and cars yielding to pedestrians.

They found that only one out of every three cars stopped at stop signs, and only half stopped before the crosswalk to allow pedestrians to pass. A pedestrian survey regarding walkability safety and engagement in the community found that participants walked to about six to nine places within the neighborhood weekly. Survey respondents also shared concerns about traffic safety. Consistent with a Behavioral Community Psychology approach, the data were utilized by the research team, the community residents, and staff from the local partner organization. For example, over fifteen families participated in a community health walk to raise awareness of safe driving practices. The health walk was organized by a number of organizations and participating families who decided to use this walk as an opportunity to educate the community about walkability safety. Parents and children created signs in both English and Spanish with self-selected messages such as, "Do not text and drive" and "Maneja con cuidado" [drive carefully] to carry during the walk. Then together, the team and the families joined the health walk alongside other community residents to continue promoting pedestrian safety in their areas.

This case study nicely illustrates the core values of Behavioral Community Psychology. First, the target **population** was actively involved in all aspects of the intervention, including identifying the concerns and taking action. Second, increased fostering of the target population's sense of personal control and **empowerment** was accomplished by families designing the signs to carry during the health walk and identifying the streets to be observed. Third, there was the use of objective and subjective assessments when evaluating outcomes, using an instrument developed by a local traffic safety expert group. Fourth, they saw an increased emphasis on **antecedent** events, and in this case, an important antecedent was the traffic signs posted at street corners indicating to drivers that the desired behavior is for them to stop. Finally, increased **interdisciplinary collaboration** occurred, as this project included a team of community psychologists, several graduate students from occupational therapy and nutrition, and one faculty member from public health.

Some might think that focusing on dog litter or traffic safety is just not important, given the other types of serious problems that we face. But behavioral community psychologists have tackled even larger issues, as the next case study demonstrates.

Case Study 16.5
The I-Files: A Community Movement for the Big Island



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The project began during the first day of a two-day behavioral training workshop in Honolulu in the spring of 1997. The workshop was on the development of community coalitions for health improvement and was delivered at the request of the Chronic Disease Branch Chief of the State of Hawai'i Department of Public Health. In attendance were many employees of the health departments

from Honolulu and several of the neighboring islands. Also present were health educators, public health nurses, epidemiologists, branch chiefs from several divisions, and the Directors of District Health Offices from Kauai and Hilo. By noon on the first day, one table was absolutely buzzing with excitement. At the table were six public health nurses, three health educators, and the district health officer. On the back of a napkin, they sketched an idea for a community health improvement initiative that would later be named I-Files. The idea was simple—for each of the six districts on the Big Island, they would develop teams of three people including someone specializing in community mobilization and action planning, another person specializing in grant writing, and another person who would be trained in behavioral evaluation. They would develop community partnerships to address the most pressing health issues in each district, and mobilize the people and financial resources needed to resolve the issues.

Many of the behavioral programs and efforts that began in 1997 continue to this day. Some of the major behavioral accomplishments include: the development of a drug and alcohol-free surf competition for area teens; a community leadership development program where the fire department trained teens in firefighting, community service, and leadership skills; a community coalition comprised of businesses, professional fishermen, and community members in Kona to minimize destructive fishing practices near the area's reefs. Further accomplishments were a community coalition to support the continued success of the Ka'u Hospital to promote community health improvement and build the capacity of residents to prevent health outcomes such as diabetes, the development of a neighborhood watch and diabetes self-management program by public health nurses, and a community policing program. To learn more about these outcomes, see the Prezi presentation.

In this case study, community members and employees of the District Health Offices were involved in a project that led to breakthrough approaches in community health improvement. By empowering the community health workers to respond to what they were learning from community members, more responsive programming was developed to meet real-world needs as they emerged in communities. By creating **coalitions** that represented multiple sectors in communities, programs and policies were developed that affected behavioral changes to reach more people, resulting in improvements in a variety of valued life outcomes. The new and modified programs, policies, and practices developed by and with community members represented a variety of behavior change strategies. By involving both the community members and the public health workforce, programs and policies were more relevant and had a long term positive influence. As this case example indicates, Behavioral Community Psychology investigators can make a difference using their innovative methods with a wide variety of community issues.

OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Clearly, the behavior of individuals and groups takes place in complex environments across a variety of settings including families, homes, schools, neighborhoods, community agencies, places of worship, and work settings. These behaviors can be complex as they are in constant interaction with and impacted by the environment.

Behavioral community interventions do not operate in a vacuum but rather compete with other competing messages, which can affect and influence the **effectiveness** of the interventions. As mentioned in Chapter 1, for many years smoking prevention interventions were implemented in schools, and yet children reported that they were almost always sold cigarettes by store vendors. The fact that youth were sold these dangerous substances did have a negative effect on school smoking prevention programs, for there were youth who wondered how dangerous cigarettes could be if they were sold cigarettes by adults. Therefore, additional behavioral interventions were needed to reduce youth access to retail sources of tobacco. As another example, commercials on the media constantly advertise the benefits of food that have high levels of sugar and fat, and these media influences will also need to be addressed by those working on childhood obesity behavioral programs.



"Community Change Logo.jpg" by Communitychange is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Some feel there are no generalizable laws of behavior that can be used to understand something as complex as a community, which has complicated layers of ecological influences operating at the individual, group, organizational, and societal levels. In other words, an intervention that might work in one setting might not be effective in a different place, so they feel that behaviorists who

believe in universal laws of behavior are overly simplistic. We have an answer to this concern. We believe that the principles of learning reviewed in this chapter are operating in community settings, but there might be important differences in how they are implemented in different settings (Jason et al., 2016). As an example, a behavioral school-based program that has been shown to work well in environments that have adequate staff and resources might have very different outcomes when located in an environment where there are inadequate resources and other multiple problems due to gangs and violence. What is important to remember is that an excellent intervention in one setting might not work well when it is implemented in another that is less supportive and reinforcing. Also, an intervention for one age group might now work for another age group, as indicated below in Case Study 16.6.

Case Study 16.6
Prevention of Prejudice



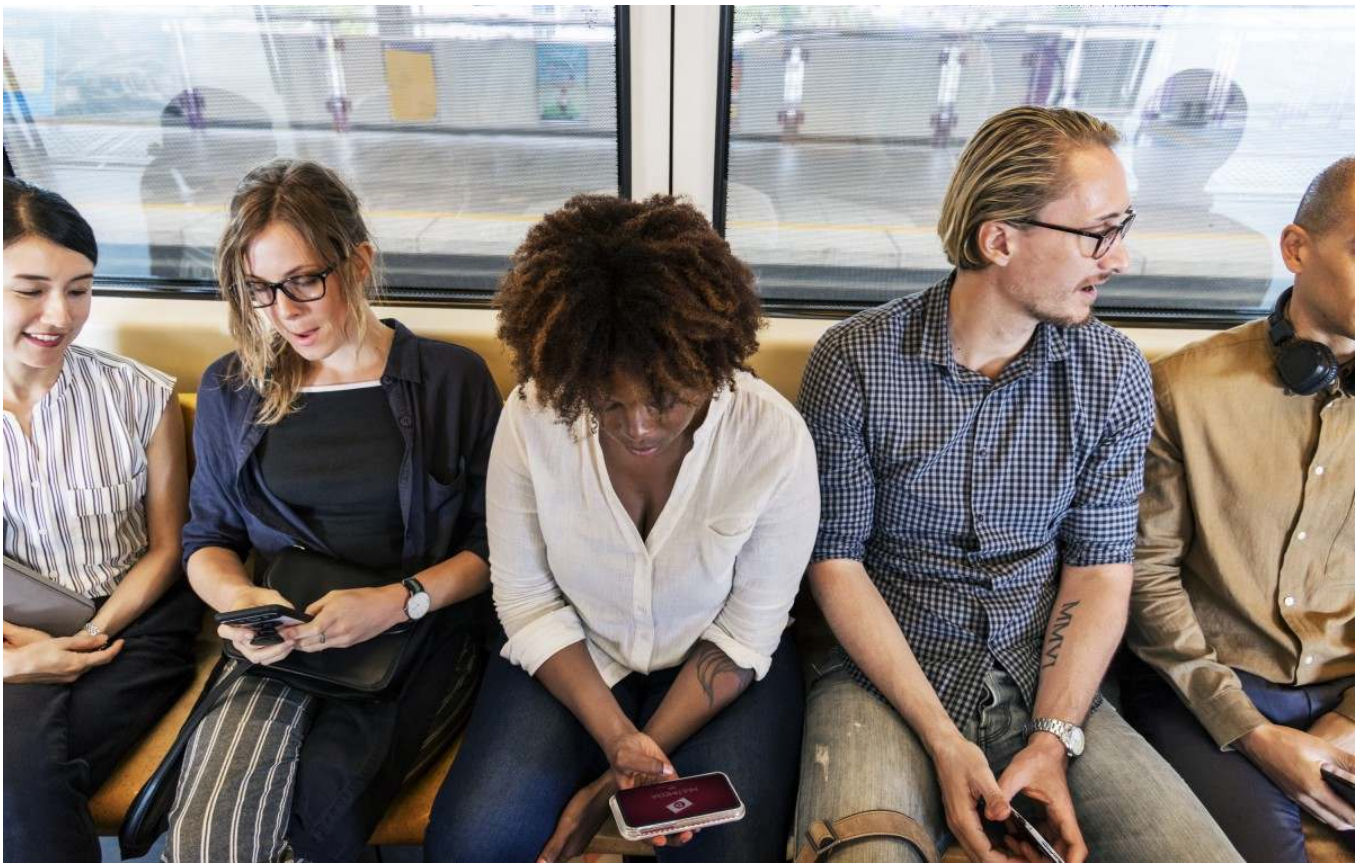
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Behavioral Community psychologists attempted to impact inter-ethnic relations of elementary school age children by implementing a peer tutoring program. These youth were shown how to tutor their classmates. Direct observations of social interactions on the playground and sociometric indices of interpersonal ratings were used to measure inter-ethnic associations before and after the eight-week program. For first-graders, inter-ethnic interactions and sociometric choices increased and improvements were found in arithmetic and reading grades. However, no significant changes were found among the third-grade program children. The first-grade children carried the benefits of the peer tutoring program from the classroom to the playground. First-grade youngsters quickly developed cohesive, interdependent groups and some continued to use their group name from the study on the playground eight months following the program's end. The findings suggest the importance of fostering cooperation and addressing prejudice early on, as indicated by the lack of significant changes for third-graders in their ratings of fellow children of different ethnic backgrounds. These findings further suggest that a behavioral cooperative peer tutoring classroom structure may improve the inter-ethnic relationships of first-grade children, who have experienced only a short history of competitive academic exercises and whose overt ethnic prejudice may be less ingrained (Rooney-Rebeck & Jason, 1986).

It is by attending to the unique history, age, and resources available in these school settings that we might be better about to understand these types of different outcomes. Basic behavioral principles are operating throughout these settings, and our task is to better identify and understand these complex environmental factors.

Some have also been concerned about the language and terms used by behavioral psychologists, who often used words such as "controlling behavior" (Mattaini, Jason, & Glenwick, 2016). With dictators using this type of repressive language to control their citizens, it is understandable that some might be concerned with the terms sometimes used by behaviorists. But these phrases do not capture the rich collaborations that occur in behavioral community interventions, when researchers work closely with community members in both defining the goals of interventions and actively participating in bringing about changes (Glenwick & Jason, 1980). As shown by the case studies above, behavioral community psychologists are able to gain control of key aspects of the environment, but it is through a collaborative, mutually agreed upon process with key members of the community (Bogat & Jason, 2000).

SUMMING UP



"Group of diverse people riding a train" by pxhere is licensed under CC0 1.0

In this chapter, the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis were utilized in the Behavioral Community Psychology case studies to illustrate how to promote real community change in a variety of settings. Behavioral community psychologists focus on the complex relationship between individual/group behavior and the environment. By attending to the relationship between behavior and the environment, whereby each impacts the other, it is possible to bring about important change.

As we end this chapter on Behavioral Community Psychology, it is useful to point out that many of our social and community problems, such as substance abuse, school failure, and juvenile delinquency, share many developmental roots such as poverty and lack of resources. Coordinating our behavioral community interventions so that they uncover common environmental causes, and take them into consideration as we implement change, will ultimately increase the enduring impact of this work.

? Critical Thought Questions

1. Discuss what you think are some of the benefits and limitations of using Applied Behavior Analysis principles to study problems of interest to Community Psychology?
2. Many community psychologists do research in schools. What do you think about the practice of some school teachers across the country using different types of tangible positive reinforcers (e.g., stickers, candy) to promote compliance and "good classroom behavior?" Justify your response.
3. Imagine that you are living in a tenant building with an active renters' association and you were elected president of the association for a one-year term. You noticed a problem with residents' lack of awareness about the need to recycle. Although the recycling bins are provided and street collection is scheduled once per week, hardly anyone is taking the recycling bins out. Most tenants are young college students who are likely to produce recycling items (cans, paper, plastic). You want to start a recycling campaign and assess its effectiveness. Based on the principles learned in this chapter, identify components of the campaign and how you would get residents to recycle. Identify how you would assess if the campaign is effective. What would you measure as the unit of behavior for which you can take baseline measures?

Take the Chapter 16 Quiz

View the Chapter 16 Lecture Slides

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10.5: Framing

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SECTION OVERVIEW

10.5.1: Framing solutions

10.5.1.1: Compulsive innovation

10.5.1.2: Blind spots as opportunities

10.5.1.3: Transcending reductionism, re-purposing the Internet

10.5.1.4: Productive innovation

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10.5.1.1: Compulsive innovation

Compulsive innovation

‘You can’t stop progress.’ One of the themes that emerges from this enquiry is the need and opportunity for large-scale, democratically mediated social design and a commitment to long-term social innovation in the public interest. At first sight it may appear difficult to see how the motivation for such efforts could arise or from whom. But these are early days and motivation can emerge from a variety of sources. To begin with, in a context of radically ambiguous technical innovation, with its accompanying upheavals and disruptions the widely held view that ‘you can’t stop progress’ clearly lacks credibility when used fatalistically, and should be set aside. Modifying this slightly to ‘you can’t stop technical innovation’ is a small step forward but doesn’t take us very far. Of far greater value is a more nuanced understanding of what terms such as ‘progress’ and ‘innovation’ actually mean, what values they spring from, whose interests are represented (or extinguished) and what longer term impacts and consequences may plausibly occur.

Such issues are hardly part of common conversation but if society is to regain any say in its own prospects, these issues need to be brought into the open and debated much more widely. Similarly, the social, political, technical and environmental consequences of neo-liberal formulas of economic growth along with ever increasing inequality are no longer in doubt across the globe. People are becoming ever more concerned about these issues and, moreover, the Earth system itself is responding to multiple human impacts with glacially slow, but unstoppable, momentum. The faulty notions of ‘progress’ in this context clearly need to be unpacked as they are fraught with ambiguity and increasingly divorced from genuine human interests (Metcalf, 2017). Australia’s Gold Coast illustrates this dilemma rather well. The mode of development on display is a living testament to a worldview characterised by profit-seeking, denial and short-termism. These are not characteristics that bode well for the future (Slaughter, 2016).

‘Progress’ is often seen as synonymous with technical innovation but such notions do not withstand close scrutiny. Similarly, a continuing free-for-all dialectic of innovation and counter innovation quickly becomes irrational in our currently divided world. In what may be an inexact but tellingly perverse reversal of Moore’s Law the stakes grow ever more extreme with each new level of technical capability. Yet business leaders and decision makers seem largely unaware of this. We can see this in the current breakout of IT company investments in powerful real-world applications such as automation and advanced robotics that look set to destroy most, if not all, semi-skilled jobs (Murphy, 2017). We see it in the irrationality of emerging autonomous weapon systems (Begley & Wroe, 2017). We also see it on the mid-term horizon in the systemic threats that plausibly arise from quantum computing (Majot & Yampolskiy, 2015). A more immediate example is the rise of GPS spoofing. The early development of this technology was undoubtedly useful as it introduced precise, reliable navigation into countless transportation applications. Now certain features in its design are being quite deliberately employed to disable it. According to reports anomalous results were first spotted by PokemonGo players near sensitive sites in Moscow and then began appearing elsewhere. For example, alarms began to sound when the master of a ship in the Black Sea discovered that his position was over 30 kilometres away from where it was supposed to be. Russia is thought to be one entity experimenting with the technology. But of equal or perhaps greater concern is that spoofing software can now be downloaded from the Internet and employed by anyone with the knowledge and will to do so (Hambling, 2017).

A similar dialectic is apparent in countless other examples, sometimes even in advance. Actively scanning the environment for signals of change does, in theory, provide time to respond. Separate scanning hits may interact to reveal previously hidden possibilities. For example, public media announce that trials of driverless ‘autonomous vehicles’ (AVs) will occur along a public motorway. A UK Minister of Transport announces that AVs will be in use by 2021 (Topham, 2017). Such developments are now becoming technically feasible. Yet around the same time a radical group publishes details about how, with a little imagination, vehicle-derailing devices can be easily and cheaply constructed and set in place leaving those responsible to disappear without trace (Thiessen, 2017). Little imagination is required to suggest that both high-, and low-tech devices will be developed to intervene and disrupt the smooth operation of AV technology wherever it is deployed. Once again, we are reminded that new technologies are never ‘value free;’ they always come with hidden weaknesses and costs, winners and ‘losers’. Those who put their faith in complex systems will eventually need to recognise that the latter are not infallible. Those with different values and what one might call ‘oppositional’ social interests will continue to take advantage of any weaknesses or blind spots (Bartlett, 2017). It follows that the ‘hidden’, non-material side of any technology is at least as significant as its physical form. It therefore requires much closer attention.

Artificial intelligence

Bill Gates and Stephen Hawking are among many who have warned of the dangers of artificial intelligence (AI) and the very real possibility that it may represent an existential threat to humanity. Fresh impetus to this debate was provided when Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk clashed over this issue. While Musk echoed previously expressed concerns, Zuckerberg would have none of it. For him such talk was 'negative' and 'irresponsible.' He's dead against any 'call for a slowdown in progress' with AI (Frier, 2017). So it fell to director James Cameron, director of Terminator 2 and other movie blockbusters, to inject some reality into the proceedings by reminding everyone of the mammoth in the room. Namely that it is 'market forces (that) have put us into runaway climate change, and the sixth mass extinction.' He then added that 'we don't seem to have any great skill at not experimenting on ourselves in completely unprecedented ways' (Maddox, 2017).

What is significant here is that it falls to a movie director to draw attention to links between the products of an advanced techno-economic system and the growing likelihood of irrational outcomes. Such concerns are fundamental to the maintenance of public safety and wellbeing. Yet, careful consideration of the social implications of technical change by public authorities has declined even as the need for it has increased. The race to create artificial intelligence is being pursued in many places. Yet, few of the key players appear willing to pull back and rigorously assess the risks or seek guidance from wider constituencies. Whether East or West, to passively 'follow the technology wherever it leads' is technological determinism writ large. It's clearly an inadequate basis upon which to make decisions, let alone to gamble with the future of humanity.

We cannot assume that advanced AI will take over the world and either destroy humanity or render it redundant. Such outcomes are certainly possible but there are genuine differences of opinion on these very questions (Caughill, 2017; Brooks, 2017). Of more immediate concern is that various agencies have been looking to AI for military and security 'solutions' for some years. Roboticised figures have been common in the entertainment industry for several decades. But wider appreciation of risks involved in their use in real-world situations has been minimal thus far. Now, however, robot soldiers are being designed and tested. In 2017, for example, a group called the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots met at the United Nations in New York. Part of the program included a film illustrating the potential of 'assassin drones' to sweep into a crowded area, identify targets using facial recognition, apply lethal force and vanish. Concerned scientists were attempting to 'highlight the dangers of developing autonomous weapons that can find, track and fire on targets without human supervision' (Sample, 2017). This may sound like science fiction (SF) but a leading AI scientist offered at least two reasons for believing that such devices are closer than one might think. In his view:

> *The technology illustrated in the film is simply an integration of existing capabilities. It is not science fiction. In fact, it is easier to achieve than self-driving cars, which require far higher standards of performance. (Also) because AI-powered machines are relatively cheap to manufacture, critics fear that autonomous weapons could be mass produced and fall into the hands of rogue nations or terrorists who could use them to suppress populations and wreak havoc (Sample, 2017)*

This is merely one branch of a rapidly evolving area of research and innovation but the prospects are clearly terrifying. Another key question raised was: who or what locus of authority provided the green light to arms manufacturers, the disruptors of Silicon Valley, or indeed anyone else to carry out these unprecedented experiments? Reinventing the world in a high-tech era – whether by innovation or disruption or both – is a non-trivial matter. To routinely and relentlessly create new dangers and hazards cannot do other than threaten the viability of humanity and social life. Yet somehow these entities continue to operate openly and with confidence, yet lacking anything remotely like a social license. Some consider that the development of AI could be the test case that decides the matter once and for all. Here is Taplin again on how what he regards as the benign legacy of Engelbart – an Internet pioneer – was turned toward darker ends. He writes that the latter 'saw the computer as primarily a tool to augment – not replace – human capability'. Yet 'in our current era, by contrast, much of the financing flowing out of Silicon Valley is aimed at building machines that can replace humans' (Taplin, 2017, p. 55). At this point, the ghost of Habermas might well be heard whispering something along the lines of 'whatever happened to our communicative and emancipatory interests?' To what extent does their absence from dominant technical discourses mean they are also missing from the products and outcomes they produce?

The panopticon returns

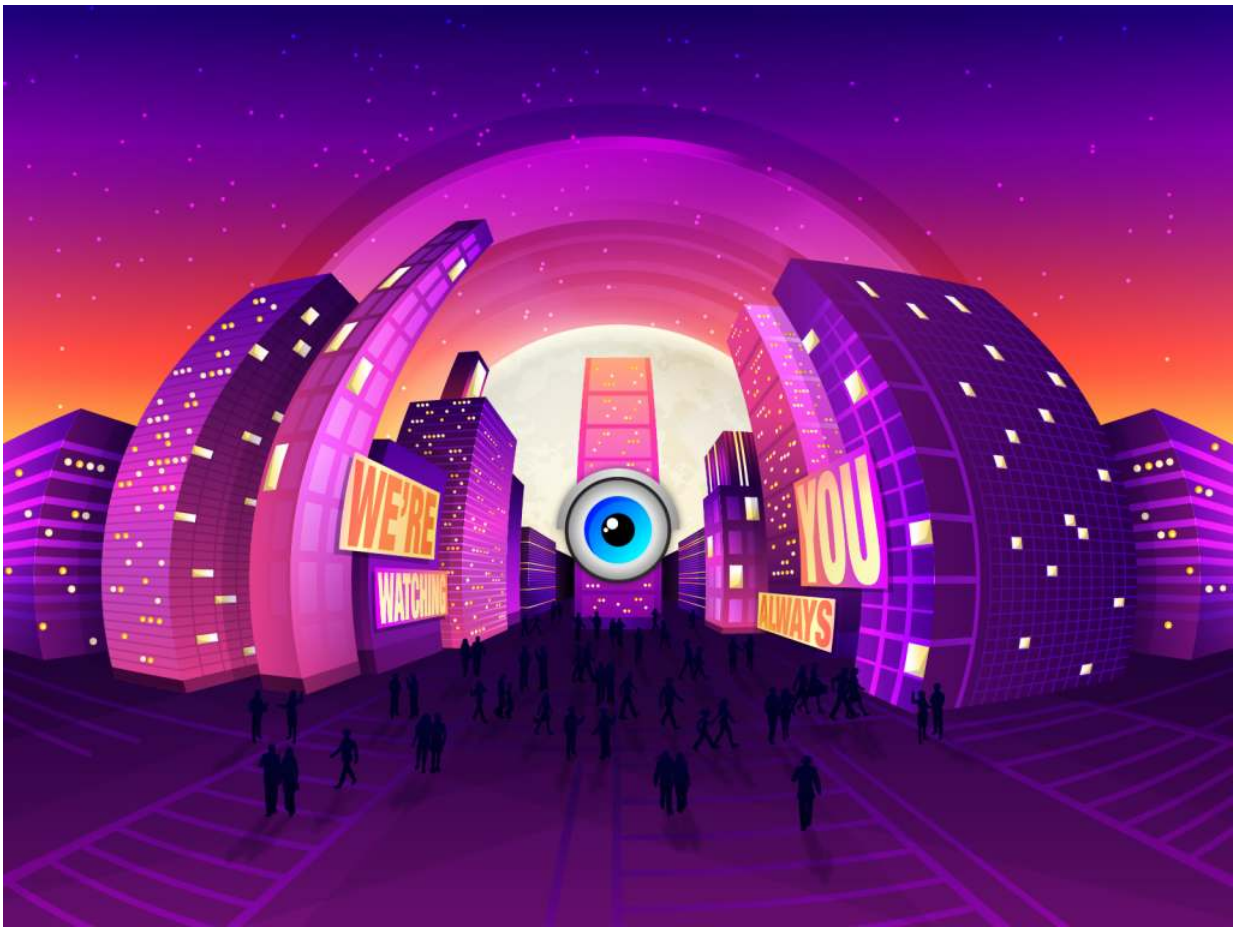
The original panopticon as envisaged by Jeremy Bentham in the 18th Century was a design for a prison in which all the inmates could be continuously monitored without their knowledge. Since they could never know whether they were being observed or not they were constrained to act as if they were at all times. Hence they became adept at controlling their own behaviour (Wikipedia,

2017). During recent years newer versions have arisen that bring this oppressive model to mind. One is in China; the other much more widely distributed. Chinese intentions to use IT for social control are revealed by Kai Strittmatter (2020), who states: "China's new drive for repression is being underpinned by unprecedented advances in technology", including:

- Facial and voice recognition
- GPS tracking
- supercomputer databases
- intercepted cell phone conversations
- the monitoring of app use, and;
- millions of high-resolution security cameras

> *"This digital totalitarianism has been made possible not only with the help of Chinese private tech companies, but the complicity of Western governments and corporations eager to gain access to China's huge market," (Strittermatter, 2020).*

This may not seem like a particularly significant departure from what's already occurring elsewhere. What is different is that China already has totalitarian tendencies since it is ruled by an inflexible party machine that shows no interest in human rights or related democratic norms. While the US has itself long been hamstrung by deadlocked and ineffectual governments it does have a constitution that protects certain core rights (such as free speech). Despite systematic predation (through copyright theft and monopoly power) by Internet oligarchs, the US also retains elements of a free press and it certainly has an independent judiciary. Furthermore, the European Economic Community (EEC) has already taken the first steps to establishing a more credible regime of regulation. In so doing it has shown that it is willing and able to take on the Internet oligarchs and force them to change their behaviour. So in the West there are real prospects of reining in at least some of the excesses.



But China is a very different story. According to reports its oppressive 'grid system' of systematic surveillance has been operating in Beijing since 2007. Aspects of this oppressive new system were summarised as long ago as 2013 in a Human Rights Report. For

example:

> *The new grid system divides the neighbourhoods and communities into smaller units, each with a team of at least five administrative and security staff. In some Chinese cities the new grid units are as small as five or ten households, each with a "grid captain" and a delegated system of collective responsibility … Grid management is specifically intended to facilitate information-gathering by enabling disparate sources into a single, accessible and digitized system for use by officials. … In Tibet the Party Secretary told officials that 'we must implement the urban grid management system. The key elements are focusing on … really implementing grid management in all cities and towns, putting a dragnet into place to maintain stability. … By 2012 the pilot system was in 'full swing' (as it had stored) nearly 10,000 basic data' (and collected) hundreds of pieces of information about conditions of the people (Human Rights Watch, 2013).*

By 2015 this vast modern panopticon was ready to be rolled out to enable the full-on mass surveillance of China's 1.5 billion citizens. According to the Metamorphosis Foundation (2020):

> *Any society that looks to stratify people based on how they look, based on their health, based on their data and things about them, is an incredibly authoritarian and sinister society. The societies throughout history that have tried to separate and stratify people based on data about them are (those) that we want to stay as far away as possible from… Collaboration of all stakeholders and demand for public debate are key to preventing situations in which the power to decide is taken from citizens and lies only in the hands of private companies or police forces…*

Since then further details of this oppressive and inescapable surveillance system in China have emerged. For example, a wired article by Rachel Botsman revealed that two Chinese data giants – China Rapid Finance and Sesame Credit – had been commissioned by the government to create the required infrastructure using copious amounts of big data. Free access to this vast resource means that people can be monitored, rated and evaluated in depth throughout their normal lives. It turns out that 'individuals on Sesame Credit are measured by a score ranging between 350 and 950 points.' While the algorithms remain secret the five factors employed are not – credit history, fulfilment capacity (or ability to abide by contractual arrangements), personal characteristics, behaviour and preferences and, finally, interpersonal relationships. Those with high scores get consumer choices, easy credit and the chance to travel; those with low scores become the new underclass with few meaningful choices at all. These are described as 'private platforms acting essentially as spy agencies for the government.' The author then adds that 'the government is attempting to make obedience feel like gaming. It is a method of social control dressed up in some points-reward system. It's gamified obedience' (Botsman, 2017).

What's particularly curious here is the inevitability of non-trivial perverse outcomes, foremost among which are the immense cultural and human costs. Masha Gessen's mesmerising and sometimes painful account of life in post-revolutionary Russia clearly demonstrates how hard it is to imagine that a cowed and passive population could retain sufficient awareness or creativity to contribute much of value to any culture, however instrumentally powerful it may appear (Gessen, 2017). In Botsman's view 'where these systems really descend into nightmarish territory is that the trust algorithms used are unfairly reductive. They don't take into account context.' Yet without a keen sense of context meaning becomes free-floating and elusive. Finally there's the inevitable emergence of 'reputation black markets selling under-the-counter ways to boost trustworthiness' (Botsman, 2017). Overall, this may turn out to be the world's prime contemporary example of a 'deformed future' in the making.

A second and equally subversive example over the last few years is the growing use of voice-activated 'digital assistants'. Skillfully packaged as mere 'assistants' and 'helpers' they are 'on' all the time and thus set to respond to every request and whim. Some of are equipped with female voices that are intended to exert a distinctly seductive effect as shown in Spike Jonez's 2013 film *Her*. What is less obvious (at least to the user) is that with each and every use the individuals reveal ever more information about their not-so-private lives. Before long comprehensive profiles are assembled, preferences noted and rich fields of data produced.

As things stand, the operators of these systems own this treasure trove of information and suggest new products and services in the light of those already consumed. Sales go up but consumers become ever more tightly bound to their own induced impulses and proclivities. Thus, instead of having open-ended learning experiences, of responding to challenges, of deepening their knowledge and understanding of their own authentic needs and human qualities, those who succumb can end up having 'feelings' for, and an ersatz fictional bond to, a remote impersonal network that exists only to exploit them. A further consequence of becoming over-reliant on such 'immersive' technologies is that the real-world skills and capacities of human beings start to atrophy. Memory, time keeping, spatial awareness are among the capabilities that wind down over time leaving people ever more dependent and at risk (Aitkin, 2016). People are seduced into becoming a core component of the 'product' being sold. As the human interiors shrink and fall away, identity itself becomes elusive and problematic.

In summary, leaving the high-tech disruptors in any field to their own devices, so to speak, simply means that the human enterprise is subjected to random shocks and abuses that end up placing it in ever-greater peril. For Naomi Klein this is part of a deliberate playbook designed to provide a minority with greater dominance and power (Klein, 2007). But it's also the result of a certain kind of blindness that comes from over-valuing the technical and under-valuing the human and the social. If there's a consistent theme here it's that power in the wrong hands creates more problems than it solves. So high-tech innovation needs to be separated from simple notions of 'progress.' It is fundamentally a question of values and power – instrumental, cultural and symbolic. If humanity wants to avoid dystopian outcomes, human societies will need to find new ways to retain their power and control and part only with what they judge necessary to governance structures that meet their real needs. In other words, it's time to disrupt the disruptors. They've had their moment in the sun and the clouds are gathering. It's time for them to stand aside so that a different world can emerge.

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10.5.1.2: Blind spots as opportunities

Blind spots as opportunities

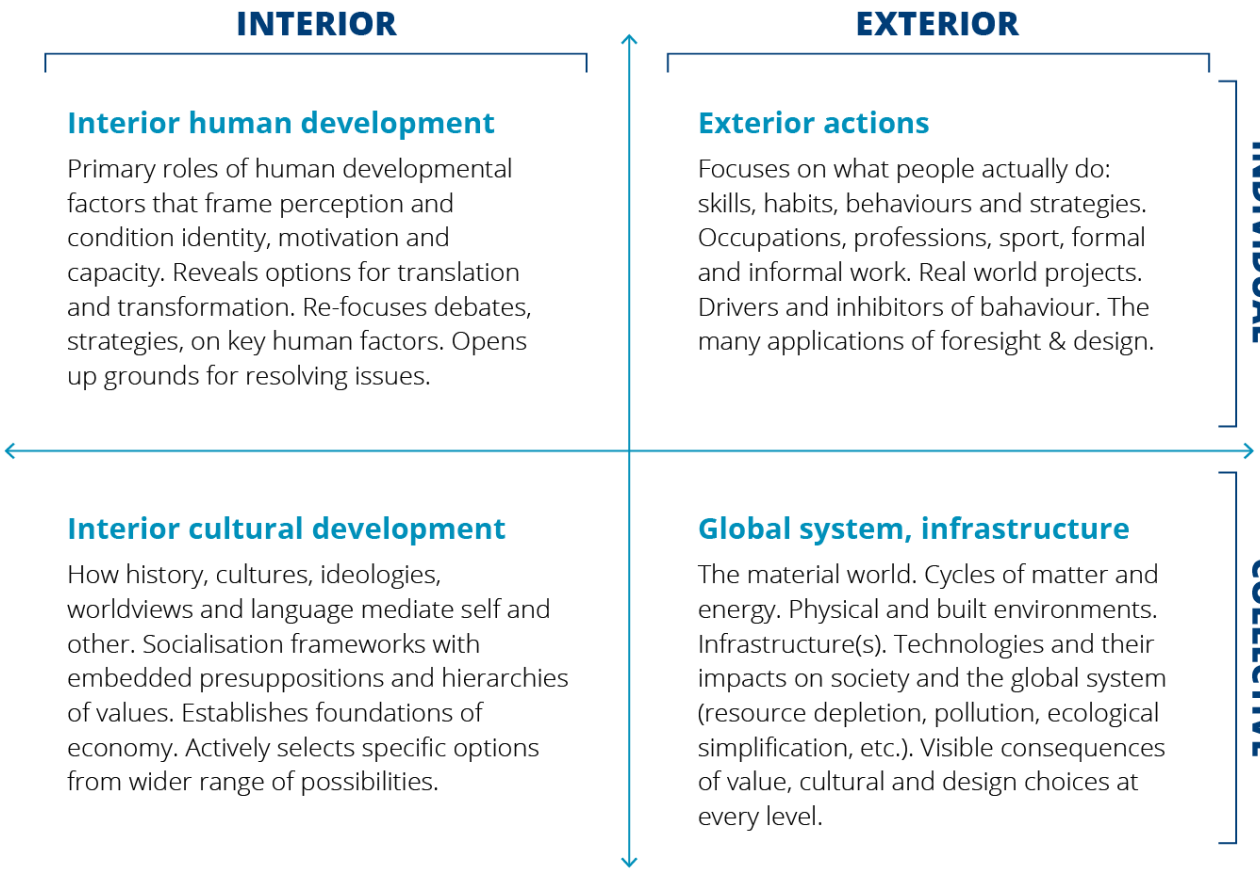


Figure 1. Four quadrants of Integral enquiry (Slaughter, 2010).

The empirical-analytic methods employed to create powerful technologies and to understand track macro phenomena both emerge from the ‘exterior collective’ quadrant of Integral enquiry. Yet taken in isolation they cannot grasp the nature of related human and cultural realities since they spring from very different sources and invoke different kinds of knowledge. Integral perspectives seek greater balance by adding an ‘interior’ dimension to both individual and collective phenomena (Figure 1). The general lack of such distinctions helps explain (and indeed to resolve) some of the confusion and conflict that occurs when, for example, new waves of high-tech innovation (exterior collective) impact on human life worlds (interior individual) and pre-existing ways of life (interior collective). As noted, people, social systems and cultures are all deeply affected. Jobs are destroyed, professions disappear and machines primed to take over operations that were previously understood to exist solely within the domain of human action. Yet the study of history, the foundations of personhood, society and culture are only marginally accessible to empirical enquiry and are therefore routinely dismissed. Which is not to say that they cannot be studied and understood by those with the requisite skills, insight and methods (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2012).

Constitutive human interests

German philosopher Jurgen Habermas produced a series of works that made significant demands on readers yet also produced insights of continuing value. Of direct relevance here is his account of ‘constitutive human interests.’ Unlike much of his work the essence of such interests are easily grasped and usefully illuminate a number of vital social processes that tend to be overlooked in high-tech environments. Table three provides an outline of Habermas theory. In this account, the technical interest relates to ‘work’ and the empirical/analytic sciences that are centrally concerned with production and control (i.e. the application of technical rules to instrumental problems). The practical interest is about human interaction. Here the concern is not with control, nor with technical processes, but with communication and understanding, both of which are grounded in language and culture. The point is to clarify the conditions for clear and unobstructed communication between participating subjects. These are seen as interpretive tasks

requiring appropriate skills. The third and perhaps 'highest' interest is the emancipatory interest. This relates to questions of power and the universal drive for emancipation and freedom of action (Habermas, 1971).

Table 3: Habermas' constitutive human interests (1971)

	Life Dimension	Form of Knowledge	Criteria	Type of Problem
Emancipatory Interest	Power	Critical	Emancipation and liberation	Normative: critique of domination, repression and distorted communication
Practical Interest	Interaction	Interpretive	Achievement of communication and understanding	Interpretive understanding and practical choices
Technical Interest	Work	Empirical/analytical	Economy, efficiency and effectiveness	Technical and instrumental

At no point does Habermas denigrate the technical interest per se since civilisation depends upon the maintenance of effective and efficient technical processes. Rather, what he is set against is the over-extension of the technical into areas that he considers illegitimate – as, for example, when decisions about new technologies are made on the basis of 'can it be done?' rather than 'should it be done?' One is a pragmatic issue concerned with technique; the other is value-laden and grounded in ethical considerations. This distinction has been widely overlooked in the present context. Then concerning the practical interest, there are many non-technical factors (such as power, ideology, marketing and direct exploitation) that impede and prevent true communication taking place between individuals and groups. The issue then becomes that of defining the conditions under which communication can be optimised. This again is not a technical question but one that relates to the richer and more complex world of human intersubjectivity. Finally, the emancipatory interest is engaged in the critique of domination, repression, mystification and institutional inertia. It tries to define the conditions within which people can create an authentic existence for themselves.

Unfortunately however, questions of limits, of the character and requirements of 'the social' and the whole question of underlying human interests – actual human needs and qualities – mean little or nothing to techno-enthusiasts and Internet entrepreneurs. As we've seen their speech patterns, metaphors, discourses were, and remain, focused on the single-minded pursuit of power, exploitation, expansion and accumulation of immense financial rewards. These features go a long way towards explaining why the Internet and many associated technologies became debased and also why they parted company from authentic human and social needs. The rise of homo economicus and the rapid expansion of humanly arid technical systems could not but produce a generalised dystopian sense that human affairs were spinning out of control. During the second decade of the 21st Century traditional research, scholarship and the scientific method itself were also being undermined by the diminished rationality of technical innovation coupled with denialism at an astonishing scale. Moreover, the tendency of traditional disciplines toward subject compartmentalism made it difficult to address the growing complexities of macro-change. Many people began to experience a sense of the coming-apart of earlier structures and assumptions, often expressed as multiple failures. For example:

- A near-universal failure to resolve major environmental issues.
- Unwillingness on the part of global elites to rein in growth or reduce over-consumption.
- Unresolved questions about the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and its aftermath.
- The related failures of globalisation and 'trickle down' economics to create a fairer and more equitable distribution of wealth.
- Growing instability and upheaval in the Middle East consequent upon the Iraq war and the abortive 'Arab spring'.
- Multiple failures of the US government to regulate or reform Wall Street, apply its own anti-trust regulations to the Internet oligarchs, develop appropriate policies on high-tech innovation and respond effectively to global warming.
- New waves of high-tech innovation were and are undermined by corporate power, mass surveillance and a newly enfranchised criminal underclass (Glenny, 2011; Zuboff, 2015).

The environment created by these interrelated and ever-shifting phenomena was and remains complex and challenging to say the least. Governance virtually everywhere has become more difficult. So it is regrettable, but not entirely surprising, that high-tech innovators have had little of value to say about the world they have been attempting to create. So long as their own innovations made it to market, these 'straws in the wind' were held to be of little significance. A variety of non-empirical and broad-based approaches to understanding were quietly developing in the background. Since they are too numerous to receive adequate attention

here they might well form the basis of a separate work. Yet the task of grasping some of the interior aspects of social change in the post WW2 era was taken up by interdisciplinary scholars such as Lewis Mumford, Hannah Arendt, Ulrich Beck, Zigmunt Bauman and Jurgen Habermas, among many others. More recent perspectives shedding further light on these matters include accounts of hypernormality (Hooton, 2016), anticipation theory (Poli, 2010), the 'de-growth' movement (Cattaneo, 2012; Videira, 2014) postnormal studies (Sardar, 2015) new economic paradigms (Raworth, 2017) and the wider use of Integral methods (Egmond & de Vries, 2011).

Overall, the selective blindness of the high-tech sector is less an indication of strength and power than of 'thin' and, in the long run, unproductive views of reality. The entire sector – and those who seek to reinvigorate it – would do well to re-direct their attention toward blind spots such as those outlined here. Properly understood, they provide creative springboards, stimuli for new thinking and new opportunities such as the following.

- Grasping the reality of global limits and the vast number of opportunities for values development, creativity, design and adaptation that they imply.
- Re-valuing aspects of 'the social' such as empathy, care, respect and in-depth communication between equals.
- Consciously seeking to understand and enable fundamental human interests, without which it is doubtful if advanced and vibrant human societies can endure.

In short, careful and genuine investments in richer worlds of meaning and significance foreshadow completely different outlooks and a radically renewed palette of options.

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10.5.1.3: Transcending reductionism, re-purposing the Internet

Transcending reductionism, re-purposing the Internet

Interior drivers, scales of implementation

Virtually everyone outside the Silicon Valley bubble who has paused to consider the complex tangle of issues thrown up by the IT revolution in general and the Internet in particular tends, at some point, to reach a key conclusion – that the key issues before us are not primarily technical. Technology provides the physical substrate and software an artificial 'nervous system' that reaches ever more deeply into human lives. But merely following technical capabilities as far as they can be driven appears to confine humanity on a fast train to Dystopia and perhaps the end of human civilisation itself. Juval Harari unintentionally provided a rehearsal, or test case, for that thesis in his book Homo Deus (Harari, 2015). Here the main driver of change was considered to be the ingenuity of large groups of people and their most significant achievements, indeed, were said to be those associated with high technology. Yet by relentlessly following this technologically determinist path, what the author refers to as 'unaugmented', humans are expected to fall by the wayside and become the 'road kill' of history. It is severe and uncompromising conclusion but unavoidable with the starting assumptions. If, on the other hand, the uses of high-tech are shaped and conditioned by progressive social drivers – such as life-affirming values and expanded worldviews – the outcomes would certainly be very different. So in playing a reductionist game with the very forces that moderate raw technical power degrades language, values, worldviews and similar culturally derived sources of meaning and capability – Harari actually demonstrates how vitally necessary they really are (Slaughter, 2017). Nor is this the only source that confirms this vital insight. As mentioned above, the idea that repressing or turning away from human qualities and social phenomena is exceptionally damaging receives powerful support from Masha Gessen in her book *The Future is History* (Gessen, 2017).

There are clearly many aspects to this story and a growing number of informed observers of this rapidly changing scene. Greenfield, for example, is by no means alone in viewing the IT revolution as a full-on invasion. So he is alert to the implications of what he calls 'the colonisation of everyday life by information processing.' As with other critical approaches he is interested not merely in raw outcomes but also in the motives of promoters, the ideas behind the hardware and the social interests involved. Working at a more fine-grained level and acknowledging such interests helps to re-frame core assumptions within corporate and business environments. In 2015 John Naughton reported on work by Doc Searles on what he calls the 'intention economy.' Of direct relevance to the issue of there being human interests beyond the purely technical is the following view. Namely that 'many market problems … can only be solved from the customer side: by making the customer a fully-empowered actor in the market place, rather than one whose power in many cases is dependent upon exclusive relationships with vendors, by coerced agreement provided entirely by those vendors' (Naughton, 2015).

From considering the IoT at three scales of implementation Greenfield wants to probe more deeply into what they mean through actual case studies (Greenfield, 2017). As we have seen repeatedly, the marketing of high-tech devices commonly assert assumed benefits to users but obscure underlying corporate benefits. So at the individual human scale biometric devices such as the Fitbit and the Apple Watch monitor a variety of health and fitness indices. Yet, these personal data are valued, analysed and used as inputs to advertising and sales. Insurance companies have vested interests in these skewed transactions such as offering reductions in premiums in exchange for such personal data. Truck and public service drivers are especially vulnerable to the imposition of more heavy-handed versions. Then, unless this trend is halted, the intensive collection of personal data may be required of all drivers and other persons responsible for vehicles and related machinery. The logical end this insidious process is akin to the imposition of total surveillance.

That these observations are not 'merely' theoretical or personal but extend to other scales is confirmed by the emergence of 'Google Urbanism,' an ambitious plan by the company's Alphabet subsidiary to reconfigure cities in its own image. Its pilot project on the Toronto waterfront sought to 'reimagine urban life in five dimensions – housing, energy, mobility, social services and shared public spaces.' However, what caused most concern was a proposed 'data-harvesting, wi-fi beaming digital layer' to provide a 'single unified source of information about what is going on.' This was intended to gather 'an astonishing level of detail' such that 'each passing footstep and bicycle tire could be accounted for and managed.' Issues of privacy and the blurring of public and private interests were set aside confirming the suspicion that 'the role of technology in urban life is obvious: It is a money-maker' (Bliss, 2018). Fortunately, opposition to this project grew to the point where it was eventually cancelled. For Morozov, ever on the alert for new forms of Internet solutionism, heavy-handed developments of this kind signal 'the end of politics.' He comments that:

> *Even neoliberal luminaries like Friedrich Hayek allowed for some non-market forms of social organisation in the urban domain. They saw planning as a necessity imposed by the physical limitations of urban spaces: there was no other cheap way of operating infrastructure, building streets, avoiding congestion. For Alphabet, these constraints are no more: continuous data flows can replace government rules with market signals. (Morozov, 2017c)*

Seen in this light the emergence of high-end 'smart cities' represents a further incursion of technical expertise into the lifeworlds of people, the ethos of cultures and the character of the settlements where much of humanity lives. More recently Sadowski has suggested that such environments may best be referred to as 'captured cities' (Sadowski, 2020). Such conclusions clearly challenge the legitimacy of this entire process. Greenfield's own recommendations include the following.

- The use of algorithms to guide the distribution of public resources should be regarded as a political act.
- Claims of perfect competence in relation to 'smart city' rhetoric should be rejected.
- Any approach the whole IT domain should include a healthy dose of skepticism.
- Commercial attempts to gather ever more data about people should be resisted (Greenfield, 2017).

Taming the ubiquitous algorithm

Standing at the core of a vast number of IT processes is the ubiquitous algorithm. Its relative obscurity and foundation in mathematics means that for many people it remains a mystery. But this need not continue. Cathy O'Neil was originally employed as a 'quant' in the heart of the New York financial district prior to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). She saw first-hand, how the algorithms that exploit 'big data' can be used productively or as instruments of power and exploitation. In her view most people are unaware of how these new capabilities have proliferated. Consequently the reliance of bureaucratic systems on them is seldom appreciated. In the US she notes that 'getting into college, getting a job, being assessed as a worker, getting a credit card or insurance, voting, and even policing are in many cases done algorithmically.' She adds that:

> *The technology introduced into these systematic decisions is largely opaque, even to their creators, and has so far largely escaped meaningful regulation, even when it fails. That makes the question of which of these algorithms are working on our behalf even more important and urgent (O'Neil 2016).*

She uses a 'four-layer hierarchy' in relation to what she calls 'bad algorithms.' At the first level are those with 'unintentional problems that reflect cultural biases'. Next are those that 'go bad through neglect.' Third are those that she regards as 'nasty but legal' and finally 'intentionally nefarious and sometimes outright illegal algorithms.' In relation to the latter she adds that:

> *There are hundreds of private companies…that offer mass surveillance tools. They are marketed as a way of locating terrorists or criminals, but can be used to target and root out citizen activists. And because they collect massive amounts of data, predictive algorithms and scoring systems are used to filter out the signal from the noise (O'Neil 2016).*

The scam run by Volkswagon to conceal the results of emissions tests is, in her view, perhaps the most well-known example; but the sale of surveillance systems to repressive regimes looms larger as a serious future threat. In her 2016 book *Weapons of Math Destruction* she looks into numerous context only to find the same dynamic at work. In one case a school district attempted to identify the weakest teachers and designed a set of tests of 'teacher effectiveness' using algorithms. Many of the criteria, however, such as how well students were learning year to year, could not be measured directly. The use of unverifiable proxies resulted in wildly varying results – but teachers were sacked anyway. From this and other cases O'Neil concluded that many algorithms are poorly designed and proxies used in place of real data invisibly distort the results. Another oft-experienced trap is where hidden feedback loops render data meaningless the more often they are run within a system. What is also significant about this account is that the underlying issues are less about mathematics, statistics or data, than they are about transparency (or its lack) power and control. Currently in the US, for example, the well-off can usually afford human representation whereas the poor are left with poorly performing data and a bureaucracy they can neither influence nor communicate with. In summary, used well algorithms can

be tools that usefully extract value from big data. Used poorly, they can certainly ramp up the efficiency of operations but at the cost of unreliable or unjust results and increasing inequality.

O'Neil (2016) suggests a number of solutions, none of which are short term or particularly easy to implement without wider social support. 'First and foremost', she suggests, 'we need to start keeping track.' For example, 'each criminal algorithm we discover should be seen as a test case. Do the rule-breakers get into trouble? How much? Are the rules enforced, and what is the penalty?' She continues:

> *We can soon expect a fully-fledged army of algorithms that skirt laws, that are sophisticated and silent, and that seek to get around rules and regulations. They will learn from how others were caught and do it better the next time. They will learn how to do it better the next time. It will get progressively more difficult to catch them cheating. Our tactics have to get better over time too (O'Neil, 2016).*

Finally she suggests that:

> *We need to demand more access and ongoing monitoring, especially once we catch them in illegal acts. For that matter, entire industries, such as algorithms for insurance and hiring, should be subject to these monitors, not just individual culprits. It's time to gird ourselves for a fight. It will eventually be a technological arms race, but it starts, now, as a political fight. We need to demand evidence that algorithms with the potential to harm us be shown to be acting fairly, legally, and consistently. When we find problems, we need to enforce our laws with sufficiently hefty fines that companies don't find it profitable to cheat in the first place. This is the time to start demanding that the machines work for us, and not the other way around (O'Neil, 2016).*

O'Neil's program for re-purposing algorithms is certainly ambitious but, given the plethora of unresolved issues in this area, it seems entirely appropriate. In her book she also calls for a 'model builder's pledge' (similar to the Hippocratic Oath taken by medical practitioners) a full-scale regulatory system, algorithmic audits and greater investments in research. In light of this she speaks approvingly of Princeton's Web Transparency and Accountability Project and European approaches (noted below) that are, starting to dictate a new raft of terms and conditions that the Internet giants will have to recognise. Ultimately, she returns to the same ground that others have indicated in arguing that such choices are fundamentally moral, hence also ethical and social.

Defensive measures, key questions

Many options are available to those who are willing to invest the time and effort in responding to these issues and concerns. In mid-2017, for example, Australian reporter Rose Donahue interviewed Helen Nissenbaum in New York about the 'obfustication movement.' This was described as a 'David and Goliath' strategy that relied on the fact that David had more freedom to act than his opponent (Donahue, 2017). Donahue noted that Nissenbaum had developed tools specifically designed to disrupt Google's tracking and ad delivery systems. One called 'TrackMeNot' allows users to browse undisturbed under the cover of randomly generated searches. Another dubbed 'AdNauseum' is a tool that collects data from every site visited by the user and stores them in a vault. This vastly overstates the user's activity and therefore serves Google false information. While such tools may at present appeal only to a minority there are undoubtedly many more to come. A high-tech defensive war against the overreach of Internet oligarchs is increasingly likely. Many of these tools will become easier to use and personal agency will be enhanced as more people avail these tools.

In summary, the present Internet has evolved – or 'de-evolved' – into its present condition over an extended period. It will therefore not easily be prised from the grasp of giant corporations. Repurposing the Internet will take time. It will take concerted social and political action as well as extensive technical backup. Charles Arthur credits online rights activist Aral Balkan with the following insight: 'If you see technology as an extension of the self, then what is at stake is the integrity of our selves'. He continues: 'Without that – without individual sovereignty – we're looking at a new slavery' (Arthur, 2017). So key issues include the following.

- What kind of society do we want to live in?

- What visions of human life, society and culture do we believe in?
- What kinds of futures arise from our collective decisions?

These are exactly the kinds of questions that have driven futures / foresight thinking and practice for several decades. As the wider implications of IT revolution cause more and more people to focus upon them so new players will need to become more involved in the search for solutions. Governments, city authorities and civic administrators at all levels will need to be open to new forms of social engagement. They, in turn will also need greater support from an informed public.

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10.5.1.4: Productive innovation

Productive innovation



Social democracy

Many of the decisions and practices of the high-tech innovators and oligarchs have gained support from prevailing assumptions about the market, the consumer, a minimal role for government and so on. Yet despite its broad influence the durability of neoliberalism as a guiding ideology should not be overstated. An in-depth review of neoliberalism by Metcalf refers to a 2016 paper published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that explicitly connects the former with some of its most significant consequences. These include ‘pushing deregulation on economies around the world … forcing open national markets to trade and capital, and for demanding that governments shrink themselves via austerity or privatisation’ (Metcalf, 2017). While such insights may appear unremarkable in themselves they represent a startling admission by the IMF whose policies have long supported such practices. The author also suggests that the ideology should not be seen merely a ‘standard right wing wish list’ but rather ‘a way of reordering social reality, and of re-thinking our status as individuals’ (Metcalf, 2017). Viewed in this light the main premise – that ‘competition is the only legitimate organising principle for human activity’ – seems unlikely to remain viable over the longer term since it rules out and overwhelms vital human capacities. These include care, compassion, philanthropy and the like which all healthy societies need in order to function at all. The decline of neoliberal values and assumptions would also mean that previously unthinkable options would emerge, as would new strategies to reform the system. A ‘new normal’ would have its chance to become established.

In the UK a then resurgent Labour Party raised the possibility that just such a development could occur through the rise of social democracy. Rundle (2017) summarised what he considered to be some of the wider implications. In this distinctively optimistic view local, national and global societies could be run as a tripartite process of state, market and community institutions, with a “democratically enabling” state enforcing limits to the private sector, mandating social-economic spaces into which community /

open / free / collective activities could expand, with democratic socialised ownership, whole or part, of key economic sectors. Such a shift would have major implications for all sectors of the economy – including IT systems and the Internet. As other essential social resources (including water, energy, finance) transitioned to shared ownership and control, Google, and other large companies could be regarded as having self-socialised (Rundle, 2017). As such there's no good reason why they could not be subjected to the very same institutional arrangements.

Such raw suggestions have a long way to go before they can be rendered into widespread practice. Yet they make a good deal of sense in the current context. Google / Alphabet, for example, may thus far have avoided the rigours of US anti-trust regulations but this may turn out to be a temporary 'victory' as other governments step in to take actions based on alternative assumptions and views (see below). Rundle's (2017) piece also demonstrates yet again why so many observers and critics of the IT revolution argue that the central issues are not primarily technical but social and political. Society as a whole needs to take part in multi-faceted conversations of this kind.

New infrastructure

There's no shortage of ideas and proposals regarding 'what needs to be done' to re-design and re-direct the Internet and, by extension, high-tech innovation in general. Helen Magretts of the Oxford Internet Institute is no exception. In order to deal with aspects of Internet aggression she suggests that:

> *Any successful attempt to prevent extremist, abusive and hateful behaviour online must be multifaceted, thoughtful and collaborative. It will involve ethical and legal frameworks to guide as well as mandate good behaviour; working with tech companies rather than making enemies of them; smarter policing of activities that are already illegal; and crowdsourcing safety, so that people and social enterprises play a role (Magretts, 2017).*

Cathy O'Neil (2016) puts a strong case for the establishment of a new infrastructure to deal with the uses and misuses of algorithms. She seeks to create reliable records of how these tools are used and by whom. She also knows that to do so will not be easy as powerful organisations normally resist being called to account. As noted before Cathy O'Neil calls for the establishment of a new infrastructure to deal with the uses and misuses of algorithms. She seeks to create reliable records of how these tools are used and by whom. She also knows that to do so will not be easy as powerful organisations normally resist being called to account. Taplin (2017), however, goes even further in proposing what he calls a 'digital renaissance.' This has various features that include:

- a shorter working week and the establishment of a universal basic income (UBI);
- measures to get the technical and creative communities working together;
- revisions of the 'safe harbour' provisions in the DMCA act;
- the Library of Congress issuing new guidelines as to the 'fair use' of creative and copyrighted material;
- revisions to, and wider application of, anti-trust regulations (to break up monoplies); and,
- a proliferation of co-operatives, non-profit companies, and what he calls 'zero-marginal-cost distribution systems.

In this respect Taplin (2017) echoes suggestions by Rushkoff (2016). Rushkoff is interested in exploring a range of social and economic inventions in the context of re-thinking what money is and is for (Rushkoff, 2016). Finally Morozov (2017), whose work has contributed substantially to this enquiry, suggests that a single data utility would be best placed to make the best use of material from divergent sources. In the light of current experience with commercial entities it would need to be non-commercial and publically owned, much as Rundle (2017) has suggested. Given that progressive governments could set up such utilities quite easily the next step would be to ensure that 'whoever wants to build new services on top of that data would need to do so in a competitive, heavily regulated environment while paying a corresponding share of their profits for using it,' (Morozov, 2017a). Morozov (2017a) adds that 'such a prospect would scare big technology firms much more than the prospect of a fine'.

Effective regulation

When the European Union (EU) handed Facebook a $120 million fine in May 2017 and Google a heavy $2.4 billion in June, both for market abuses, many wondered what the next step would be. By mid-2017 the answer came in the form of another acronym – the GDPR (or general data protection regulation). Long-time observer of the IT scene, John Naughton, emphasised that GDPR was not a directive but a regulation so it would become law in all EU countries at the same time. Some of the implications follow:

- The purpose of the new regulation is to strengthen and rationalise data protection for all individuals within the EU. It also covers the export of personal data to outside the bloc. Its aims are to give control back to EU residents over their personal data and to simplify the regulatory environment for international business by unifying regulation.
- The GDPR extends EU data-protection law to all foreign companies that process the data of EU residents. So even if a company has no premises or presence within the EU, if it processes EU data it will be bound by the regulation. And the penalties for non-compliance or infringement are eye watering, even by Internet standards: fines up to €20m and/or 4% of global turnover.
- More significantly, the GDPR extends the concept of "personal data" to bring it into line with the online world… The regulation gives important new rights to citizens over the use of their personal information… Valid consent has to be explicitly obtained for any data collected and for the uses to which it will be put.
- Citizens will now have the right to request the deletion of personal information related to them (Naughton, 2017a).

This was obviously what pundits call a 'game changer' as it fundamentally changed the rules for how these organisations collect, use and manage private data. Naughton (2017a) called it an 'existential threat' to those currently operating beyond the reach of existing data regulation laws. It certainly helped to resolve a situation in which people's private lives everywhere are regarded as 'fair game' to entities whose sole interests lie in sales, profit and power. And it went a long way toward resolving some, but by no means all, of the concerns expressed so clearly by Zuboff (2015) and others. At the same time public service sectors such as education and health need to adjust their own procedures which will involve considerable costs.

The technical is political – the return of anti-trust

As the oligarchs have steadily penetrated ever more areas of human and economic life they've become so powerful that they abjure regulation by elected bodies and are frequently said to be way 'ahead' in terms of their products and services. But this is a mistake. If we accept that the technical is political it is harder to confuse technical mastery with other forms of expertise. As ever, Morozov (2017b) nails the core of this confusion by reference to underlying social interests. He poses the following question:

> *How could one possibly expect a bunch of rent-extracting enterprises with business models that are reminiscent of feudalism to resuscitate global capitalism and to establish a new New Deal that would constrain the greed of capitalists, many of whom also happen to be the investors behind these firms? (Morozov, 2017b.)*

During mid-to-late 2017 it was clear that, while the Internet giants were not about to collapse, social and political forces on both sides of the Atlantic were beginning to line up in broadly the same direction. Signs were emerging that might be called their 'golden age' could be coming to a close. In September, for example, the Guardian editorialised that 'Amazon's dominance of the eBook market may not have raised prices, but it left the sector anaemic and competition floundering'. Another commentator was quoted as saying of the oligarchs that he did not think 'any credible economist who isn't an Ayn Rand lunatic would accept that these are not monopolies'. More people than ever are becoming aware of the fact that something is very wrong with this picture.

During the same month Ben Smith, a well-regarded Buzzfeed writer, was among the first of many to confirm what he called a 'palpable, perhaps permanent, turn against the tech industry,' (Smith, 2017). He added that 'the new corporate leviathans that used to be seen as bright new avatars of American innovation are increasingly portrayed as sinister new centres of unaccountable power,' (Smith, 2017). In his view this constituted 'a transformation likely to have major consequences for the industry and for American politics' (Smith, 2017). He also reported on how politicians of widely differing views were urging 'big tech' to be considered less as private companies than as 'public utilities,' (Smith, 2017). After years of denying the value or relevance of treating the high-tech giants in the same way that Bell Telephone and Microsoft had been treated in earlier years (i.e. broken up into small units) anti-trust legislation was finally back on the agenda. Similarly Washington senators Elizabeth Warren and Claire McCaskill both became involved in making anti-trust regulations part of the Democratic agenda over the next four years. Overall, the gap between ideas and effective action was perceptibly closing.

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